

The Fourteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time

July 6, 2025

What is the ideal lifestyle for a Christian?

Is it going off on missionary journeys like the 72 disciples in today's gospel? Is it a life dedicated to serving the poor like Mother Teresa did? Does it mean selling everything we have or spending hours in church?

If you and I decided that we wanted to live Jesus' teaching in a radical and complete way, what would we have to do?

The answer to that question is both very simple and, at the same time, sometimes hard to figure out. When it comes down to it, the ideal Christian life is simply doing whatever God's will is for me.

The fact is that every baptized person has a vocation - a calling that is unique to each of us. There is something that only you can do, people only you can reach. You have been placed in this specific moment in history for a purpose. We can only discover that purpose - that mission - by making God's plan the center of our lives.

God's plan for us is greater than anything we could ever imagine for ourselves. No matter how ambitious you are, God is still more ambitious. No matter how impressive your dream for your future is, God's dream for you is even more grand. If we only pursue our own goals and vision, we are settling for much less than what God wants for us. That is why Saint Catherine of Siena could say, "Be who God meant you to be, and you will set the world on fire."

At the same time, for most of us, God's plan will mean living in a way that seems ordinary according to the world's standards. For example, most men and women are called to marriage. There might not seem to be anything remarkable about that. But when we live marriage the way God intends it - not just as another lifestyle choice, but as a vocation and a sacrament - then it becomes something extraordinary. It becomes a lifelong commitment that reflects the goodness and faithfulness of God. When couples are generous about having children, then they participate with God in creating new life. Just bringing another

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human being into existence is something incredible, something that is bound to change the world. It might not seem extraordinary in the world's eyes, but marriage is one of the great vocations that God uses to build up His Church and to strengthen the world.

So, how do we discover what God's plan for us is?

Probably the most common way is by listening to our hearts. If God is calling us to be a deacon, to get married, or to go to the missions, He will first place the desire for it in our conscience. There will be a stirring within us. We will have the sense that whatever we are currently doing is not enough, that there must be more.

If you are sitting here today with a feeling of dissatisfaction with your life, then turn to God and ask Him to reveal to you what He wants. It could be that you have been settling for what you thought would make you happy or what you thought others expected of you. And it turned out not to be enough. Now's the time that God is asking you to listen to what His plan is for you.

Once we get a sense of what we think God might be calling us to, the next step is to reach out and talk to someone about it. For instance, if you are feeling a calling to religious life, then call a religious order and ask to speak to their vocation director. Or if you know someone in religious life, then ask to speak to him or her.

The fact is that we never discover God's plan for us on our own. It is often others who see it in us before we even see it in ourselves. By sharing what our desires are with others, God's will becomes clearer to us. And God will put the right people in our lives to help us.

One thing is sure, to do God's will means facing our fears. The reason so many people settle for less than God wants for them is because it requires us to go beyond what we are used to, our comfort zone. It demands that we go places we've never been before and do things that we never thought we could. Just consider the disciples in today's gospel. They must have felt some trepidation when Jesus sent them out like "lambs among

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wolves.” They must have said to themselves, “Jesus, you can’t expect me to do what you do.” Most of them would probably have preferred staying in the background and following Jesus around. But Jesus wanted something more for them that could only happen if they stepped out and faced their fears.

Because they did that, great things happened. Those disciples did things they probably thought weren't possible. They moved hearts by their preaching, they healed the sick, and they cast out demons. When they told Jesus about it, He promised them that they would do greater things still. And the same is true for us, if we commit ourselves to God’s plan for us.

Pope Benedict XVI once said, “The world promises you comfort, but you were not made for comfort. You were made for greatness.” None of us will reach our full potential simply by following the world’s standards of success. God desires so much more for us - more than we could ever desire or imagine for ourselves. When He created us, it was with a purpose. We can discover it - and we can fulfill it - if we listen to His voice, put His will before our own, and face our fears with confidence that He will never let us down. And we will reach our ultimate calling - to have our names written in the Book of Life and to spend eternity with God.