

23rd Sunday in Ordinary Time – Year C (2025)

Most of us, during the course of everyday conversations, like the convenience of using some very well-known phrases, which, when you stop and think about it, are pretty annoying. Here are just a couple of examples.

“Same difference.”

If you say that, then either you don't know what “same” means, or you don't know what “difference” means. Which is it?

“If I told you once, I've told you a thousand times.”

Ok. If you've said it that many times and are still having to repeat it, the message is obviously not getting across, and most likely won't with one more identical delivery.

“Like looking for a needle in a haystack.”

It's humorous to imagine someone who once upon a time lost her favorite needle in a haystack, trying, with a meticulous desperation, to find it.

And lastly, “You can do anything you put your mind to.”

Sorry, not true. There is no way I could ever play quarterback for the 49ers.

Jesus, too, it seems, comes up with a few aggravating phrases of his own, as we heard just a moment ago.

“If anyone comes to me without hating his father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, and even his own life, he cannot be my disciple.” But don’t forget to love your enemies. Lk 14:26

Compare what Jesus says to this: what if one day this week, your favorite celebrity, pop star, or sports hero knocks on your door and invites you to join them on a tour around the world?

Would you get up, leave everything and everyone, and take them up on the opportunity of a lifetime?

For some of us, we might need a few minutes to think about it. Even though the offer is incredible, it doesn’t change the fact that you would need to leave school or work, family and friends, possessions, and positions and head out the door.

Instead, would you carefully, prudently, and thoughtfully not have to “count the cost” and consider the consequences before making that decision?

Jesus, today, asks his disciples to do exactly that. He isn’t trying to scare them off, but he wants them to know what they are getting themselves into.

Jesus was going to change the world, and He knew that for the disciples, this meant their lives would change as well.

Because when we decide to follow Christ, our lives will be blessed abundantly; however, it also means we’re going to have to make a lot of sacrifices.

“Whoever does not carry his own cross and come after me cannot be my disciple.” Lk 14: 27

- It means being at Mass every Sunday, even if we have a busy schedule.
- It means having holy friendships and letting go of some people who lead us down the wrong path.
- It means being faithful to the commandments and the teachings of the Church, when we would rather do things our own way.

Christ also challenges children and young people to take up their own cross.

- By waking up and going to bed according to your parents’ instructions.
- By giving your teacher respect and a good attitude because they have earned it.
- By reaching out to that classmate who seems to spend too much time by themselves.

Discipleship entails costs, including giving up comfort, control, time, and personal desires. Still, it promises significant rewards, including eternal life, deep joy, spiritual purpose, a supportive community, and the presence of God.

In other words, there’s no negotiating with Jesus. There’s no calculating. There is no saying, “Well, if the cost reaches this, then I’m not interested in Jesus anymore.” Because Jesus says, “You can’t sign up that way. Nobody signs up for seventy percent of what I require.”

Disciples are all in, or they’re not in at all.