

An initial reading of today's Gospel makes Jesus appear harsh and uncaring, but he is trying to prepare his friends for the future trials and tribulations that will come their way.

Discipleship is not to be seen as an easy option. Following Jesus, means walking with him in his passion, death and resurrection. It is not for the faint hearted.

Jesus puts forward three conditions for discipleship:

Prioritise – ensure God comes first in your life;

Be ready to die to yourself – carry your own cross;

Make yourself vulnerable – renounce your possessions.

Then he says, because this is going to be challenging, you better sit and discern before you continue the journey of discipleship.



Trying to be a disciple is not easy, but today's first reading draws our attention to the depth of the wisdom of God. God's intention for humanity has been fully revealed in Christ who willingly sacrificed himself in order to save us. So, it is the spirit of wisdom that helps us to respond to the invitation to discipleship.

In the second reading, Paul sent Onesimus back to Philemon in the spirit of sacrifice. Although Paul needed Onesimus and had every right to retain him, he allowed him to return to his former master Philemon who equally needed him. Philemon also had to sacrifice something. He has to drop all his misgiving against Onesimus. So, he was admonished to receive Onesimus as a brother rather than as a slave.

In the spirit of commitment and sacrifice, the wisdom of God becomes fully alive and active in us. It also helps us deepen our trust in God's love and protection. Hence, we can confidently proclaim in the words of today's psalm: *"O Lord you have been my refuge from one generation to the next"*.