

**HOMILY 23<sup>RD</sup> Sunday Ordinary Time**  
**September 7, 2025**

I recently heard about a man named Bob. He was single and lived with his father and worked in the very successful family business. When it became apparent that his father would not live much longer and he would soon inherit quite a fortune, he decided it was time to find a wife. One evening at an investment meeting Bob saw the most beautiful woman he had ever seen. She took his breath away. He approached her and said, “I may look like just an ordinary guy, but in just a few years my Father will die and I will inherit \$400 million dollars.” Three days later, this beautiful woman became Bob’s stepmother.

In the Gospel reading today, Jesus tells the people that if they are going to be his disciples they must hate their family members, carry their own cross, and renounce all their possessions. Scripture scholars tell us that something gets lost in the translation. Jesus does not intend for us to hate anyone. It means more that we prefer Jesus to our family members, or put Jesus first in our lives. We also need some possessions to survive, but we cannot be overly attached to them. So what does this mean to be a disciple of Jesus in practical terms? First of all, I think we need to follow Jesus not just when it is easy, but also when it involves personal cost and sacrifice. We need to have less of a focus upon ourselves and see the needs beyond ourselves and have a purpose beyond ourselves. There is so much focus today upon self care, and certainly we need to take care of ourselves. The less personal contact we have with other people, the more self focused we can become. Social media makes us more self focused. We post something waiting to be liked. We cannot have our primary focus and purpose on ourselves and on our possessions. The woman in the story I told earlier was pretty much focused upon herself and possessions. She may have married out of love but after three days I find that hard to believe.

I also think we need to stop working for superiority and rather work for excellence. If we are working for superiority we are trying to be better than others. Social media promotes superiority as we are constantly comparing ourselves with others. That comparison to others never leads to something good. When we are working for excellence we are working to be the best version of ourselves that we can be. We are trying to become what God is calling us to be. One way of seeing if you are on the right track now is asking yourself “If this is the last day of my life, what would I be remembered for?”

How many of you remember Bubba Smith? He was a football player who started at Michigan State and then played 9 years in the pros. After he retired from football, he and Dick Butkis were signed to do commercials for Miller Light. Do you remember the ads? They would chant back and forth “Tastes great, less filling. Tastes great, less filling.” Shortly after the commercials started, he went back to Michigan State as the Grand Marshal of the Homecoming Parade. The college students were chanting “Tastes great, less filling. Tastes great, less filling.” He realized the impact these commercials were having on college students. That same year he went to Fort Lauderdale for Spring Break. He saw all of the drunken college kids up and down the beaches shouting “Tastes great, less filling. Tastes great, less filling.” When his contract came up again he walked away from the contract even though it very lucrative. He realized that he did not want to be remembered as the guy that promoted alcohol to college students.

The woman in the story I spoke about earlier would probably be remembered as the woman who married someone she did not love for money. What would you be remembered for? Is it self focused or other focused? Is it focused on material possessions? Is it focused upon superiority or excellence? Does it reflect your values? Does it indicate that you are a disciple of Jesus Christ?