

On the Dangerous Road

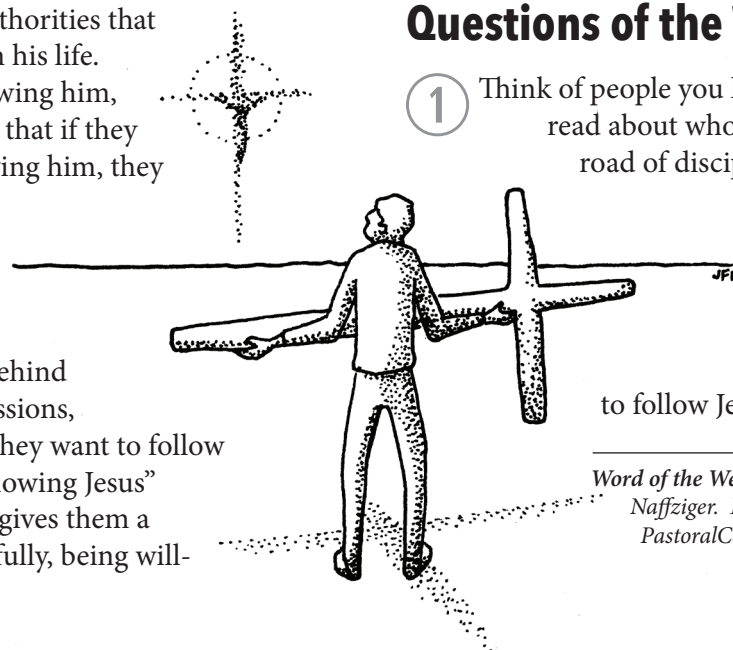
This Week's Readings at Mass

- ▶ Wisdom 9:13-18b - Solomon's prayer
- ▶ Philemon 9-10, 12-17 - Plea for Onesimus
- ▶ Luke 14:25-33 - Sayings on discipleship

All three readings today offer examples of God's mysterious nature and remind us that God's ways are not always our ways. We all have our preferences of how we want things to go for us in life, as well as our hopes of how things will turn out if we follow the rules. The Book of Wisdom reminds us explicitly that we can't imagine or understand what the Lord intends for us and our world. Paul writes to Philemon of how he wishes he could keep his dear friend Onesimus with him, yet Paul feels compelled to send him back for a higher purpose which he can't fully understand yet. Jesus then tells the crowds that what they thought was the ideal in love is not the ideal at all. All are reminders that we can never fully understand the vision God has for us as individuals or as a whole. We are called to keep listening and responding as God invites us to, even when we don't know why God is leading us in such a direction

As today's Gospel reading opens, Jesus is on the road to Jerusalem, which was code language for the people of his day, meaning "trouble." Jews of the time recognized Jerusalem as the place where prophets met their doom, finally killed by the unjust powers they challenged. Jesus knew he was on the road to a confrontation with the authorities that would ultimately cost him his life. With "great crowds" following him, he pauses to make it clear that if they choose to continue following him, they must be prepared to say goodbye to the life they know.

Jesus tells them they must be willing to leave behind their families, their possessions, and all that they know if they want to follow him. There is no "half-following Jesus" or "half-discipleship." He gives them a choice. You either follow fully, being will-



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"The corruptible body burdens the soul."

Sheepish Question:

What weaknesses frustrate my commitment to follow Jesus' way?

ing to leave everything behind, or you don't follow, he seems to say. Such words may seem harsh, but Jesus refuses to sugar-coat his calling. Those following Jesus have presumably already experienced joy, new life, community, grace, and healing as they've walked with him. Now he wants to make sure they know they are also heading down a dangerous road and they should choose him with eyes wide open. It is a challenge that almost surely stopped some people up, and made them decide to go back to their former, safe ways of living.

Questions of the Week

- 1 Think of people you know or have heard or read about who continued to travel the road of discipleship even as the cost to themselves became more evident. What do they have to teach you?
- 2 What do you need to renounce to follow Jesus more faithfully?