

St. Lawrence the Martyr Parish

September 8, 2019

We know how the enthusiasm of a new beginning frequently erodes when we learn the true costs and risks of the promises we have made. Initial commitments are easy. Perseverance is hard!

Today, large crowds gather around Jesus. They are enthusiastic. They are not aware that he is on his way to Jerusalem or what will happen to him there. For them it seems like a **parade**. Others may assume that he will challenge the authorities in Jerusalem. For them it seems like a **march** to victory. For Jesus, it is like a **funeral procession**. He knows why he is on his way to Jerusalem. Jesus does not want to scare us away or frighten us. But he clearly tells us that, if we wish to be his disciples, we must be willing to pay the costs and take the risks involved. We need to carry our own crosses. But we will also be guided by the Holy Spirit! And accompanied by the other disciples and Jesus himself!

Following Jesus, being missionary disciples, means listening attentively to the gospel, the living Word of God, allowing it to take deep root in our lives and bearing fruit. We must act on the gospel, not merely think or meditate on it! The kingdom of God is a place of

justice and peace – for everyone, without exception. It is a place of mercy and compassion, respect for truth and goodness, unity and harmony, love of God and neighbor, recognizing that we are all children of the one God and sisters and brothers of one another.

We live in very difficult times – in the Church and in the world. There is so much division and polarization, so much anger and hatred, so much enclosing ourselves behind walls with people who think exactly the way we do. But Pope Francis, relying on the Word of God, gives us the antidote to all of this poison: true encounter with others; authentic mutual respect and dialogue; inclusion; recovering respect for Mother Earth, the environment.

It is increasingly difficult to build up the kingdom of God in our midst. But that is the challenge the risen Lord gives us. Jesus accompanies us on our journey together. The Holy Spirit gives us wisdom, prudence, courage, guidance.

Let us acknowledge the costs and risks of being Jesus' disciples, but let us embrace this vocation with all our minds and hearts. Our Lady of Guadalupe, you are with us always! Embrace us with your motherly love. *Ven, Holy Spirit, Ven!*