

**As we close out this season of Ordinary Time**

**We receive another lesson on discipleship**

**What it is**

**Some of the qualities of a disciple**

**How do we live it out?**

**Our first reading was only 2 verses**

**It began with a cry from Zion or Israel to their God**

**Why have you forsaken us?**

**Why have you forgotten?**

**And it closes with words of comfort from God**

***Even if a mother should forget the child of her womb***

***I will never forget you***

**God is present in the world**

**He is present in our lives**

**Although it may seem as if he is absent at times**

**In the Letter to the Hebrews, St Paul reflects on this**

***All discipline for the moment seems not to be joyful,***

***But sorrowful;***

***Yet to those who have been trained by it,***

***Afterwards it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness.***

**This reading from Isaiah is from a time when the Israelite nation  
has turned from God**

**Not all of them**

**God always preserved at least a remnant, a few faithful people**

**It is the remnant that calls out today**

**But as we read last week**

**The sun rises on the good and the bad**

**Likewise, when His people turned from Him**

**All feel the punishment**

**Job knew what this was like**

**In the midst of his suffering he said:**

***Shall we indeed accept good from God***

***And not accept adversity?***

**But even in this, God will not forget His children**

**This turning from God is what Christ speaks of today**

**Whom will you serve?**

**God or mammon?**

**No one can have 2 masters**

**You will either love one or hate the other**

**Be devoted to one and despise the other**

**In this reading, Jesus offers us examples of the extreme**

**Either one or the other**

**There is one central question**

**How this is lived in the less important matters is both / and**

**But the foundation is built on a choice**

**Whom or what will we serve?**

**In a certain respect, we all are slaves of something**

**We all have our master**

**There is one thing that ultimately sways our choices**

**Seek first the Kingdom of God**

**Look around**

**Look at the lilies in the summertime**

**How beautiful they were**

**But where are they today?**

**Look at the birds**

**How they are taken care of**

**Even in the midst of a long cold winter**

**So is Jesus telling us to just forget striving to provide for ourselves?**

**For our loved ones?**

**Is it that easy?**

**Just trust**

**And if things go bad, it is proof you don't trust enough**

**It is not quite that simple**

**He is not calling us to forget these things**

**He is using the extreme to make his point**

**He is calling us to make that one foundational choice**

**God or mammon**

**What has our ultimate devotion?**

**What is at the very center of my life?**

**Make that call**

**Seek first the Kingdom of God**

**Then get to work**

**Very few of us are called to go off to a monastery or convent**

**Even then, the leadership has to be concerned for the needs and well-being of others**

**Jesus invites us to look at our lives**

**This is perfect timing as we begin Lent on Wednesday**

**To take a look and see what is at the center**

**What is the model of our life?**

**Discipleship or the world?**

**We can see this in many of the cities in the world today**

**When St Patrick's in NYC was built**

**It dominated the surroundings**

**The same can be said for Holy Name Cathedral in Chicago**

**For almost any city, especially in the US**

**But go there today, and what do you find?**

**They are not easy to find**

**Even with today's GPS**

**What is easy to find is the skyline**

**The towers**

**The financial centers of the city**

**When we look into our hearts, what do we find?**

**Worry and anxiety?**

**Or trust and love?**

**Jesus tells us not to let worries and anxiety be our focus**

**He knows we need food and clothing**

**We need shelter**

**But life is more than food**

**The body is more than the clothes we wear**

**Life itself, our very existence is a gift from God**

**We exist because of His providence and love**

**Shelter and food are important**

**But what is our highest concern?**

**Is it our bank statement?**

**Our education?**

**Our retirement portfolios?**

**When these are the center, our lives are turned upside down**

**God is something we fit into these things**

**But when God is our center**

**These things fall into proper perspective**

**Could you imagine a mother forgetting her child?**

**Even if that happened, God will never forget**

**Not a sparrow, not a flower**

**Certainly not a son or daughter**

**This gives us confidence**

**Seek first the Kingdom of God**

**He doesn't call us to seek only His kingdom**

**But to seek it first**

**And let everything else fall into place**

**This way our focus is sharp, and on the right thing**

**We will know what to do with our money**

**Our health**

**Our time and our leisure**

**Then they will be used to serve God and His kingdom**

**When we seek first the Kingdom of God**

**God will provide**

**He will provide manna at times**

**He will provide work at times**

**He will provide life**

**Our worries and anxiety cannot provide any of this**

**We are most precious in His eyes**

**We accept whatever he offers**

**And we work hard to bring it to fruition**

**Not in anxiety and worry**

**But in confidence and love**

**For His glory**

**For His kingdom**