

## Commentary on the Gospel for Wed, Oct 4th 2017

### Memorial of Saint Francis of Assisi

Upon first (and even a second) read today's gospel seems awfully harsh. Give the poor disciples a break already they said they would follow! However, Jesus in His infinite wisdom saw the conditional nature of their commitment. The first disciple said I will follow you wherever you go, but Jesus probed, what if I don't have a place to go. Was the commitment still there? The next two disciples had a couple of things to do first, but once those were met they would definitely follow Him. Jesus basically told them the time was now. Jesus wants more than a superficial commitment. He is asking us, urging us, like the Nike ads to, "Just do it". Be all in.

Think about so many commitments we make in our lives. You commit to going on a diet, but find yourself binging on the weekend and special occasions. You commit to praying every morning, but wake up too late and have to hurry out the door to get to work on time. You commit to a nurturing and loving relationship but seem to find fault with everything your spouse does around the house. Upholding a commitment requires a high degree of persistence and consistency. And that is what is being asked of us today.

Today's gospel is inviting us to have a deeper level of commitment in our relationship with God. How appropriate that the Memorial to St. Francis of Assisi is celebrated today. St. Francis is a powerful example of being all in. As we work through our day today, let's reflect on how our commitment to an unconditional kinship with God can be transformed from words into reality. Let this commitment, as we express it and transmit it to those around us, lead to the creation of something new, something of value, in the world. And finally, let us honor St. Francis by taking to heart his prayer.

Lord, make me an instrument of your peace:

where there is hatred, let me sow love;

where there is injury, pardon;

where there is doubt, faith;

where there is despair, hope;

where there is darkness, light;

where there is sadness, joy.

O divine Master, grant that I may not so much seek

to be consoled as to console,

to be understood as to understand,

to be loved as to love.

For it is in giving that we receive,

it is in pardoning that we are pardoned,

and it is in dying that we are born to eternal life.

Amen.

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