

**Homily – Friday of the 18th Week in Ordinary Time -- August 7, 2020
(Catholic Teachers of the Year Celebration)**

Once again we welcome you all to this Liturgy of the Eucharist as we gather to recognize and celebrate our Catholic Teachers of the Year!

We know all too well that good teaching cannot be reduced to technique alone; good teaching comes from the identity and integrity of the teacher. Who you are infuses your work!

Our celebration this morning is focused in the Word of God given to us for this Friday of the 18th Week in Ordinary time.

“Whoever wishes to come after me must deny himself, take up his cross, and follow me. For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will find it.” (Matthew 16: 21-27)

And so, in light of this scripture, we ask ourselves not only what does it mean to be a good teacher, but what does it mean to be a follower, a disciple of Jesus?

These words of Jesus show us the true meaning of our spiritual journey of faith, and the pedagogy which we use in our teaching.

I'm sure the disciples were taken by surprise when they heard these words of Jesus. I wonder how many of them, like normal students, became distracted, disinterested or even considered turning away.

Ah, yes, but as they say, love is ingenious! Jesus the Rabbi, the good teacher, continued to show them how to love, how to self-sacrifice by loving them the way they each needed to be loved.

Brothers and sisters, this is our call as Missionary Disciples, to teach as Jesus taught. As Pope Francis has reminded us: "Educating is an act of love; it is the giving of life."

Jesus' words to us this morning invite us to go deeper into the mystery of what it means to be his follower. Self-denial and self-sacrifice are not simply burdens we bear alone. They are opportunities to love as Jesus loves, with the promise of the Eucharistic Lord himself who will be our food for the journey, our strength.

My friends, let us continue to teach in the manner of Jesus, let us instruct and mentor those in our care showing them that it is only in this gift of self to others that we find true happiness.

Once again, congratulations! ¡Felicidades!

Mother Mary, Seat of Wisdom, pray for us!