

# The Deacon's Corner by Deacon Ron Desmarais

## Are you a Disciple of Christ?

The Marriam-Webster Dictionary defines Disciple as: one who accepts and assists in spreading the doctrines of another

The Catechism paragraph 1816 states: The disciple of Christ must not only keep the faith and live on it, but also profess it, confidently bear witness to it, and spread it: "All however must be prepared to confess Christ before men and to follow him along the way of the Cross, ..." Service of and witness to the faith is necessary for salvation: "*So everyone who acknowledges me before men, I also will acknowledge before my Father who is in heaven; but whoever denies me before men, I also will deny before my Father who is in heaven.*" (Mt 10:32-33)

Christian discipleship is the process by which disciples grow in the Lord Jesus Christ and are equipped by the Holy Spirit to overcome the pressures and trials of this present life and become more Christ like. This process requires believers to respond to the Holy Spirit's prompting to **examine their thoughts, words and actions** (See Act of Contrition) and compare them with the Word of God. "*In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.*" (Jn 1:1) This requires that we be in the Word daily—studying it, praying over it, and obeying it. In addition: "*we should always be ready to give testimony of the reason for the hope that is within us*" (1 Peter 3:15)

According to Scripture, being a Christian disciple involves personal growth characterized by the following:

**Put Jesus First In All Things** (Mark 8:34-38) "*He summoned the crowd with his disciples and said to them, "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 and that of the gospel will save it. What profit is there for one to gain the whole world and forfeit his life? What could one give in exchange for his life? Whoever is ashamed of me and of my words in this faithless and sinful generation, the Son of Man will be ashamed of when he comes in his Father's glory with the holy angels."*

This utterance of Jesus challenges all believers to authentic discipleship and total commitment to Him through self-renunciation and acceptance of the cross of suffering, even to the sacrifice of life itself. The disciple of Christ needs to be set apart from the world.

**Follow Jesus' Teachings** (John 8:31-32).

*"Jesus then said to those Jews who believed in him, "If you remain in my word, you will truly be my disciples, and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free." We must be obedient disciples and doers of the Word. Obedience is the supreme test of faith, and Jesus is the perfect example of obedience to the Father even to the point of death (Philippians 8:9-11)"... but that which comes through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God, depending on faith to know him and the power of his resurrection and (the) sharing of his sufferings by being conformed to his death, if somehow I may attain the resurrection from the dead."*

**Fruitfulness** (John 15:5-8) "*I am the vine, you are the branches. Whoever remains in me and I in him will bear much fruit, because without me you can do nothing. Anyone who does not remain in me will be thrown out like a branch and wither; people will gather them*

and throw them into a fire and they will be burned. If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask for whatever you want and it will be done for you. By this is my Father glorified, that you bear much fruit and become my disciples." Our job is not producing fruit. Our job is to abide in Christ, and if we do, the Holy Spirit will produce the fruit, and this fruit is the result of our obedience. As we become more obedient to the Lord and learn to walk in His ways, our lives will change. The biggest change will take place in our hearts, and the overflow of this will be new creation (*thoughts, words and actions*) representative of that change. The change we seek is done from the inside out, through the power of the Holy Spirit. It isn't something we can conjure up on our own.

#### **Love For Other Disciples** (John 13:34-35)

*"I give you a new commandment: love one another. As I have loved you, so you also should love one another. This is how all will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another."* 1 John 3:10:11 tells us, *"In this way, the children of God and the children of the devil are made plain; no one who fails to act in righteousness belongs to God, nor anyone who does not love his brother. For this is the message you have heard from the beginning: we should love one another."* Love is defined and elaborated on in the entire chapter of 1 Corinthians 13 (Love is Kind, etc). These verses show us that love is not an emotion; it is action. We must be doing something and involved in the process. Furthermore, we are told to think more highly of others than of ourselves and to look out for their interests (Phil 2:3-4) *"Do nothing out of selfishness or out of vainglory; rather, humbly regard others as more important than yourselves, each looking out not for [one's] own interests, but (also) everyone for those of others."*

**Evangelism - We Are Commissioned** (Mt 28:18-20). *"Then Jesus approached and said*

*to them, 'All power in heaven and on earth has been given to me. **Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations**, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you.' And behold, I am with you always, until the end of the age."* We are to share our faith and tell everyone believers and nonbelievers alike about the wonderful changes Jesus Christ has made in our lives. ***Too often, we believe the lie from Satan that we don't really know enough or haven't been a Christian long enough to make a difference.*** This is **NOT TRUE!** Some of the most enthusiastic representatives of the Christian life are new believers who have just discovered the awesome love of God. They may not know a lot of Bible verses or the "accepted" way of saying things, but they have experienced the love of the living God, and that is exactly what we are to share.

#### **Are You A Disciple Of Christ?**

I have given you something to think about, to ponder, and to examine as to your relationship with Christ and discipleship. You must make that decision on your own. I have said little here and allowed scripture to speak for me on this matter. We have been baptized and that makes us a Child of God, but it doesn't make us a Disciple. ***We have to choose*** to become a Disciple with the Grace we have been given by the Holy Spirit.

*I would like to give credit for the outline and some commentary to [www.GotQuestions.org](http://www.GotQuestions.org) a Protestant website that is more Catholic than they realize. Their mission statement is almost a paraphrase of the Creed whether they know it or not. It is only marred by continuing objections from misguided Fundamentalism. I pray for them to fully come home to the One, True Church founded by Jesus Christ. I welcome my prodigal brother and sisters with the Love of Christ.*