

It seems every week I get one of those robo calls that goes something like this: - **“Good day! I want to congratulate you: - you have been chosen to spend 10 days at our first class resort in the Bahamas.”**

Other times, it is to tell me I have won 50 percent off my next duct cleaning or a new set of storm windows.

Everywhere I go it seems someone is trying to lure me in, to give them my business.

It is what we call **“marketing.”**

From the examples I have given you it is clear that the whole thing is based on **“REWARD.”** Follow us and you will have good things happen.

Clearly it works! Firms spend small fortunes trying to invent promos that will lure us in, **turn us into customers, into followers. They never mention the cost.**

So what gives with Jesus? What is he offering to make us his followers?

**“If anyone would come after me, let them deny themselves, and take up their cross and follow me.”**

### **A Cross?**

Because you and I know that the Cross leads to Resurrection and the promise of eternal life, we tend to gloss over these words. We focus ***on the reward not the cost.***

To use the vernacular: - **“Jesus is telling it like it is!”**

He is talking – openly and clearly – about **“the cost of discipleship.”**

To be his follower – to be his disciple – requires **“SACRIFICE.”** Jesus demands we give him our all.

Remember the story of the “Rich Young Man” who asks Jesus what he must do to be saved and when Jesus says he must sacrifice his wealth he walks away.

The obvious question is: - who is going to accept such a call? How do we expect to build up the Body of Christ in a world hooked on conspicuous consumption and reward?

It turns out Jesus is not naïve or misguided. Being fully human, he knows something about our nature. He knows that we are capable of desiring the highest good. Aspiring to embrace our full potential and accept the cost.

Time and again we see that people will literally lay down their lives for what is just. First responders, soldiers, ordinary citizens will face injury and death willingly sacrificing themselves to do what is right.

Following Jesus comes with the willingness to sacrifice. (This is the reason that Christians have always honoured the martyrs. Those who have sacrificed all.)

You and I may not be asked to make the same kind of sacrifice but our call is the same. I’m talking about doing what is right regardless of the cost. Sacrificing our time, talent and treasure to serve God – sharing his love with the poor, the marginalized, the persecuted.

For example, not turning a blind eye to racism, sexism and all the other “isms” that diminish the children of God. Speaking up and acting regardless of the cost.

As it turns out, demanding personal sacrifice is not against our nature: it is what makes us truly human and a child of God.

So here we are on the second Sunday of Lent and hearing the message of sacrifice. Being called out to rediscover that it is in offering up our lives that we gain eternal life.

**“For whoever would save his life will lose it; and whoever loses his life for my sake and the gospel’s will save it.”**