

In the late 1980s a volunteer approached a leader of what was called the Sanctuary movement in the United States that served refugees from central America, and asked if she could join the movement. The leader said to her, *"Before you say whether you really want to join us, let me pose some questions: are you ready to have your telephone tapped by the government; are you prepared to have your neighbours shun you and reject you; are you strong enough to have your children ridiculed and harassed at school; are you ready to be arrested and tried with full media coverage? If you are not prepared for any of these things, you may not be ready to join the movement. For when push comes to shove, if you fear these things, you will not be ready to do what needs to be done for the refugees."* The woman decided to think things over.

Jesus in calling us to discipleship does not offer us a pain free life, He calls us to listen out and mingle in the very places that kingdom values are lacking. We are not to embrace the way he calls us without due consideration of the consequences.

Baptising people is easy, but living as a disciple demands of us that we have to pursue the things of God. It may be that in our world today even to come to church is a radical statement that there is more to life than status and wealth. That love of God and neighbour is a radical way of life confronting those who think otherwise. What we stand for is a challenge to the society around us.

Choosing discipleship above self-interest means sacrifice, but it also means liberation. We are not defined by what we have, or who we think we are, but rather by something deeper, a self-worth that we discover through the presence of God.

Jesus' words would sort out the serious and the curious. When we present a Christian life to the world, we become witnesses, not just the curious, but the followers of him who has called us all to be disciples. Not everyone can follow this path. The drive, as Jesus said in the gospel, is to build and to battle for something we believe in. Not everyone can commit to such a challenge.

As we celebrate our faith in this Eucharist today, let us remember and give thanks that we have been chosen and called, and pray that our radical discipleship may stir the hearts of those we meet.