Read: Luke 14: 25-33

In the gospel from today's Mass we once again hear Jesus turning to us and asking 'but do you want to be my disciple?'

"Great crowds accompanied Jesus on his way". They no doubt followed for all sorts of reasons: maybe they found Jesus the speaker inspiring and uplifting, some will have been hoping to receive a healing of their sickness, perhaps they enjoyed a sense of fellowship in being amongst a generally good-natured gathering, some will in one way or another just have been 'following the crowd'. To an extent, each one of us is in that great crowd, and each day Jesus turns to us and looks at us and asks 'do you want to be, not just one of the crowd, but my disciple?'

When a student is beginning a course of study, the teacher might well ask 'do you really want to do well in the exam? When an employer is interviewing a prospective employee, the employer will be trying to gauge just how much the person really wants the job. When a new player joins a sports club, the coach might well ask 'are you committed to playing for this club, because I need whole-hearted effort and loyalty from my players'.

'Do you want to be my disciple?', asks Jesus. Whether it is to gain exam success, do the job we so much wanted to have, play for the team (and stay loyal to it, whether things seem to be going badly or well) or be a disciple of Jesus, it's going to take hard graft. That's the way rewarding life is. "Anyone who does not carry his/her cross and come after me cannot be my disciple".

Note that when Jesus speaks of "hating" father, mother, etc. he is not contradicting the law of love and the 10 Commandments: he is simply saying, in assertive language of the day, that preference for him must outweigh all other considerations. *A complete surrender to Christ is necessary to complete the task of Christian living\*\*.*But we should not immediately over-dramatiseJesus' call to a disciple to "carry his/her cross". For most of us most of the time it is about the ordinary everyday struggle to do what staying close to Jesus requires us to do in love of God, family, friends and neighbour.

But essentially discipleship is about a personal surrender to the risen Christ, to know him with you, and to live life in this world for him and not for ourselves. Simply to try on our own initiative to 'be good' is still good, but it is not discipleship.

Do we want to live today as one of the great crowd, or do we want to entrust all to Jesus and live as his disciples? He invites each of us, and offers infinite reward, but warns us that as with all worthwhile things in life it does call for real commitment. His door is always open.

\*\*From commentary of Ignatius Catholic Study Bible