

Newtbec

NEW WAY OF BEING CHURCH

24th Sunday of Ordinary Time

HOPE: BELIEVE, LIVE AND GIVE

MONTHLY THEME: ALL THE EARTH PROCLAIMS THE LORD

SET YOUR FACES LIKE FLINT!

Jesus presents a hard choice to his disciples in that *"For anyone who wants to save his life will lose it; but anyone who loses his life for my sake, and the sake of the gospel, will save it."* The apostles must have been taken aback with the ultimatum given by Jesus to take up their cross and to follow him as a price of discipleship. It would have been easy to think that the path to heaven would be more comfortable for them now since they 'knew' the Lord.



Image: ©123rf.com

SCRIPTURE QUOTE
TO MEMORISE:

"How
gracious is
the Lord,
and just; our
God has
compassion"

(Ps. 114: 5)

The paradigm set by Jesus may have been hard for them to understand, just as it may be for many of us today. "Wouldn't following Christ be much easier without the cross?", we might ask.

For his part, James helps us to connect the dots between the cross and discipleship by teaching us the importance of us building the bridge between faith and works. James says that, it is, as Jesus implies, not enough to conveniently say *"Jesus is Lord!"* but have no "works" to show. In other words, it is not enough to give mere 'lip-service' to what the Church teaches without "lifting a finger" or volunteering for any form of useful service to others or by extending any help to those in need. Such an attitude just does not add up in the narrow road that leads to heaven.

There seems to be a "secret" to achieving what the Lord asks of us in this life. **It comes with finding the balance between having faith and the practice of works.** We are called to live and evangelise the faith with "works" at home, in the office, among friends and even with those who may not be too friendly with us, and yes, also with the stranger in our midst.

We are given an assurance of a reward from Jesus, when we, like him, set our faces like unquenching flint so as to have this balance even in our moments of doubt and difficulty. This is the attitude we must possess, with our faith in one hand and "works" in the other. This balance comes with sincere prayer and in having a deep love for the Lord. However, it also comes with a price, that is, "to carry our cross and follow him" at all times.

At the end, this is the truest test of quality discipleship. ✚

SCRIPTURE
of the DAY

Is. 50: 5-9;

Ps. 114: 1-6, 8-9;

Jm. 2: 14-18;

Mk. 8: 27-35.