

13th Sunday in Ordinary Time

(Sunday June 28, 2026)

Have you ever had to choose between **two good things**?

- Between staying late at work to finish an important project or getting home to be with family...
- Between helping someone in need or keeping your own good plans...
- Between time with good friends – and giving time for your parish.

Most of us have had to make choices and our Gospel today is about the making the greatest choice of all.

Some Gospel passages are easy for us to hear, but today's isn't one of them – Jesus says: *"Whoever loves father or mother son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me,"*

We have kids sitting right next to their parents – and parents with their kids – if we're honest, we either tune these words out – or they make us uncomfortable.

After all, throughout the Gospels Jesus teaches us to honour our parents, to love our neighbour, to care for our families.

So, why is He saying this?

I don't think Jesus is asking us to love our families less, I thinking He's asking us to love God first – and always first; because **when God is our first love**, everyone else is loved better.

If Jesus isn't at the centre of our lives, eventually everything else becomes quickly and easily centered on us—our wants, our opinions, our comfort, our plans.

But when Jesus comes first, He TEACHES us how to love our spouses, parents, our children, our friends, our fellow parishioners, even strangers **with His heart** instead of our own.

And that is why I think Jesus **follows immediately** with speaking about the Cross, *"Whoever does not take up his cross and follow me is not worthy of me."*

Putting Christ first always involves sacrifice:

- It means getting up in the middle of the night because a baby is crying.
- It means remaining faithful to your marriage when life becomes difficult.
- It means visiting an elderly parent when we're tired after work.
- It means apologizing first, even when we're convinced, we're right.
- It means coming to Mass on Sunday when there are a dozen other things competing for your time.

- It means volunteering when nobody notices.

Love **always costs something.**

In our first reading this weekend, we hear about this wealthy woman from Shunem, a small village in Israel.

She notices Elisha passing by and offers a meal – expecting nothing in return. She simply recognizes a holy man and opens her home and offers food and a room.

It's such an ordinary act of generosity, but it BECOMES extraordinary because it is done for love of God.

God appreciates and rewards those who do for others “gives even a cup of cold water to one of these little ones...”

Putting God first leads us to do ordinary things with great love – ordinary acts of love and kindness are made extraordinary when we do them as loving Christians.

Small acts of love become great acts of discipleship when they are done for love of Christ and His Church, love for other people.

Today we will gather for our Parish Picnic – and while we hope for a beautiful day and for everything to go right - what makes an event like this, a coming together of our community **so beautiful & so wonderful**, is that **it is the culmination of the loving gift of many people** and many simple and yet significant acts of love and kindness that has brought this altogether.

Friends, what makes a Christian family – YOUR FAMILIES – so special, so wonderful is that you place God at the very centre of your lives.

We place God first, each other second and ourselves third.

And each day, God's love is what urges each of us to grow in our own deeper and more meaningful expression of love.

And our community, this community reflects that – God is at the centre of all of our lives.

This community isn't strong because of programs, or the number of Masses, or anything else we can see – it's built upon love, the love of those who founded our parish – and those of us here.

The world we live in tells us that if we keep our lives for ourselves, we'll be happy, but Jesus tells us exactly the opposite: *"Whoever finds his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for my sake will find it."*

The happiest people I know are not those who have accumulated the most – they are the people who have given themselves away the most, been the most loving and self-sacrificing.

The happiest people are the people who have discovered that when God comes first, the cross is no longer simply something we carry, it's the way we learn to love.

Think about it, for the people who say, "If Jesus could give everything for us, I can do this/or that for someone else" and then follow through with their actions – they usually don't regret their decisions...

When we put God first, everything becomes better. Marriages are stronger, our kids become more secure, families are more loving and friendships are deepened.

And our parish too becomes more joyful, not because life becomes easier – but because we are united by this sacred purpose, this truth and reality: that Jesus teaches us all to love

And friends, we remind ourselves today and each day, God never asks us to love anyone less.

He asks us to love Him first, so that we can love everyone else more.