

“If anyone comes to me without hating his father and mother, wife and children brothers and sisters, and even his own life, he cannot be my disciple.”

Jesus doesn't teach hate. His whole life, His teaching, the Gospel is filled with love. Listen to His teaching; “No greater love has a person than he lay down his life for his friend.” We've got to look beneath the surface in order to understand today's Gospel.

Several years ago I read the story of Franz Jagerstalter. He was an Austrian and during the Second World War he was drafted by the Nazis but refused to enter the army. He was a husband and the father of three children. He believed strongly that the Nazis were diabolical. Because of his refusal to join the army he was beheaded. He preferred nothing to the love of Christ.

It is the custom for newly ordained priests to have memorial holy cards made up. On my memorial card was printed a saying of St. Benedict, “Prefer nothing to the love of Christ” I believe that is what Jesus is saying in today's Gospel; nothing comes before the love of God, the love of Jesus. No sacrifice is too great.

Where does that leave you in relation to your wife, your husband, your children. The way I see it they are all part of your love for God. In loving them you love Jesus.

For Blessed Franz Jagerstalter that love meant martyrdom, dying for Jesus. For most of us it means living for Jesus. And so the work you do each day, the burdens you carry are all for Jesus.

How can we live such a life? Not by a diet of TV and newspapers. Our diet needs to be Jesus in the Holy Eucharist. Jesus in daily prayer. Jesus in feeding the poor!