

SoulSpace

SERIES: OUR VOCATION, OUR CALL.

Season colour: **GREEN**

In this series, **Fr Gerard Moloney CSSR** looks at the common vocation we all share as Christians.



GOING FOR GOLD

Jesus wanted him to make a total commitment to following him, but the young man wasn't able or prepared to do that. He couldn't give that level of commitment. He couldn't put Jesus before his money – and so he walks away sad. Jesus had identified the young man's weak spot.

The story isn't so much about wealth and the pitfalls of being wealthy as about obstacles that get in the way of putting God first. The young man couldn't make God his number one because money mattered most to him. He couldn't follow Jesus with one hundred per cent dedication because other things were more important. The young man wasn't prepared to surrender his lifestyle.

TOTAL COMMITMENT

The message of the Gospel is clear: Being a follower of Jesus demands one hundred per cent commitment. Jesus doesn't want half-hearted followers, partially committed Christians. He wants us to give him our all.

Few of us are burdened with great wealth – though it's a burden we might like to have – but there are other things that can get in the way of following Christ. Maybe it's a love of possessions, a need to always have the latest and the best of everything. Maybe it's a fear of change, or an inability to trust or to love. Maybe it's a stubborn attachment to a particular vice or compulsion, like an internet or alcohol addiction. Maybe it's something rooted in fear or insecurity – like a fear of publicly identifying as a Catholic because the church and religion have such a bad press and because there is an aggressive secular humanism on the rise. Maybe it's an anger at the hierarchical church – even though

the Vatican and Jesus are not the same.

How hard it is for us sometimes to give up those things, to let them go. But as Jesus assures us in the Gospel: "All things are possible for God."

OUR REWARD

Today's Gospel offers us another message too, a consoling promise: if we follow Jesus faithfully, we will be repaid one hundred times over in this present time and with eternal life in the world to come.

As winners in all walks of life know, giving one hundred per cent is tough; it demands sacrifices; it costs. There's a price to pay. Putting in long hours in the gym or the practice field, working extra hours at work or college, giving up holidays or free time in order to achieve our goal – these are hard to do and there are times when even the most dedicated athlete or student or worker can be tempted to give up, to cut back on training or effort, to put in less than one hundred per cent. But if one perseveres, the rewards are fantastic – an All-Ireland or Champions Cup medal, first class honours in an exam, gaining the coveted position at work.

And that's the promise Jesus makes to his followers also. There will be days and times when we let him down, when we doubt, when we sin, when we drift – but follow him faithfully and we will win the gold. Follow him faithfully, and we will get our reward. Follow him faithfully, put in one hundred per cent – and we will earn eternal life. We will win the gold medal beyond all gold medals.

That's not just a promise. It's a guarantee. ■



Today's readings

Wisdom 7:7-11
Hebrews 4:12-13
Mk 10:17-30

GOD'S WORD TODAY

In the Gospel, to be a disciple of Jesus means to travel with him. In Mark's version, the evangelist presents this in symbolic terms as literally taking the road with Jesus, the path which will lead to Jerusalem and the cross.

In today's episode a man comes up and asks how he can inherit eternal life. Jesus tells him that it is not simply a matter of keeping the commandments, but that it will cost him dearly. He invites the person concerned to give up his wealth and adopt the life of a disciple. He is taken aback at Jesus' words. Jesus has

told him that the cost of eternal life is to become his disciple, which will be "costing not less than everything". Possessions would be an encumbrance to the missionary activity and outlook of the disciples. Mark reveals that the person concerned is in fact extremely wealthy; as someone who has always observed the Law, he would have used his wealth for the benefit of those less fortunate. Jesus invites him to join the circle of his disciples and we are once more given a picture of a person's reaction to this invitation. In this case, it is a regretful refusal: the cost is too great.

Each of us is called to give our vocation one hundred per cent commitment.

Today's Gospel is about the commitment needed to be a follower of Jesus. It's a famous story. A young man comes up to Jesus with a question: "Good master, what must I do to inherit eternal life?"

He is clearly a good, religious young man because he has kept all the commandments from his earliest years. But Jesus challenges him to do even more: "There is one thing you lack. Go and sell everything you own and give the money to the poor; and you will have treasure in heaven; then come follow me."

But the young man's face falls, and he goes away sad, because he is a person of great wealth.

