

## **Father Tom's Homily – 13<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time: Being Fully Alive**

Are we fully alive? “The glory of God is man fully alive” wrote St Irenaeus. Let's break it down. “Glory” radiates from God which shows His Holiness. Therefore, the Holiness of God is radiated in human to be fully alive: both physically and spiritually, for we are spiritual beings as well as physical. Many people feel dead because they are dead. They live only for the physical needs yet refuse to embrace their capacity for being spiritual. In the fullness of God, “The Holiness of God is seen in the man or woman who is whole; physically and spiritually alive.” It is in this context that we can come to an understanding of those demanding instructions in today's Gospel: Matthew 10:37-38. “Whoever loves their father or mother more than me is not worthy of me; whoever loves their son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me; and whoever does not take up their cross and follow me is not worthy of me.” Wow – what a powerful yet contradicting statement. Firstly, let's look at ourselves as parents. As responsible adults, we have an accountability to be a role model for our children. Sad to say, there are parents or role models who convince their children (and young adult children) to engage in actions that would destroy their spiritual lives. For example, the adults who teach their daughters or nieces to be on contraception. Or adults who teach their young to cheat at business, or at work; those who instill in them to hate, to lie or to deceit. When a child or teenager chooses to follow their adult mentor who leads them to sin, then that vulnerable child, teenager or young adult would be loving that “wrong-doing adult” more than God. That child would not be worthy of God; at least not until he or she rejects sin. The second mandate of “son and daughter” strikes us as a harsh statement. “Anyone who loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me.” We think about our cherished children, with tenderness. Our hearts explode with love and pride

just visualising them in our minds. How can we be told that if we love them more than we love Jesus, we are not worthy of the Lord? It is simply that Jesus Christ must be the centre of our lives. We love our children because they are not just our children; they are FIRST the Lord's children. We are their temporary guardians, here on earth. If the worship of God is not a priority in their home, if they let their children convince them that the Christian life is too demanding for modern day people, then these parents would be loving their son or daughter more than God. Let's look on the bright side; when parents allow the presence of God in their homes to motivate their every action, when they are committed to raising their children to be responsible Christian men and women which the current world hungers for, then their parental love for their children will reflect their love for the Lord. Catholic parents do not love their children more than they love God. Their love for their children is an expression of their love for God. And finally, "Whoever does not take up his cross and follow me is not worthy of me." Christ's love is sacrificial love. He loves by giving. He calls us to love by giving. This is a real cross. People carrying the crosses of a terminal illness, bearing a deep pain and division within a family, or experiencing a life-changing tragedy. A person might be in so much pain that he or she just wants to give up, even to the point of going to war with God rather than accepting the burden to carry in participation with the cross of Christ. If we refuse to follow the Lord because we are convinced that our crosses are too much for us, then we are not worthy of being called disciples of the Lord. "If you have the Lord, you have it all." St. Paul wrote: "Do you not realize that when you were baptized you were baptized into the death of Christ, so that you can live the life of Christ." Millions of Christians are living testaments of God's message: They are fully alive; physically and spiritually. May the Glory be alive in our lives forever and ever, Amen.