

Seminarians of the Archdiocese of Winnipeg Newsletter

Volume 3 Issue 1 January 2023

Reflection from Deacon Oliver Omega



Deacon Oliver Omega
Theology 4
Sacred Heart Seminary and School of Theology

What does it mean to be a disciple of Christ today?

Today the Christian is faced with numerous challenges to the faith. There is heightened independence and individualism that absolutizes human freedom. The person determines morality and is not based on objective truth as divinely revealed. Hence, we hear folks say, “that part of the bible does not apply to me and my situation.” Science has become the ultimate revealer of truth. Christian teaching is considered old, antiquated, and hence no longer relevant. Furthermore, the world provides comfort and convenience, making it difficult to engage in the spiritual life and restrain the passions of the flesh. So what does it mean to be a disciple of Christ? And how do we live out our Christian discipleship?

People misunderstand that discipleship means being subject to rules; being subject to the Church. Rather, It is an encounter with Jesus Christ Himself and the internalization of what he has done out of love for us which draws in us a response of love. Christian discipleship, therefore, is a relationship. It is not the subjecting of self to rules and an institution but the giving of self to a Person – the Person of Jesus Christ. This self-giving is one’s response to love.

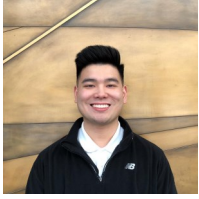
Christian discipleship is to love in the same way as Christ loved. Christ embodied love. It is he who reveals and teaches us what it means to love. Today, ideologies and technologies inundate us that promote

and intensify self-love and self-affirmation; the kind of love that pulls the person away from Christ. It is, therefore anti-Christian, and anti-Christ. It is the same sin as Adam. Deceived by the devil, he wanted to be like God. His disobedience was thus because of self-love.

My spiritual director with the Legion of Mary, Fr. Gerry Sembrano once said that the first sign that a Christian is losing their faith, is when they stop coming to mass. Losing one’s faith in the Eucharist is losing one’s relationship with Christ. Christian discipleship, therefore, today means returning and remaining faithful to the Eucharist. Christ teaches, nourishes, strengthens, and helps us grow in love for God and our neighbor through the Eucharist because it is Jesus Christ himself who is love. It is hence imperative for Christians to remain faithful, to grow in love, and to worship and adore Christ in the Eucharist.

Every new year, we make our “new year resolutions”. Let us resolve to increase the practice of Christian discipleship by increasing our devotion to the Eucharist. It is only in Jesus and through Jesus, that we can live out our Christian discipleship. Christ enables us to see beyond the ideologies and the challenges that hinder us from seeing the truth. It is in Christ that we find purpose and meaning - a person, truly loved by God.

Reflection from Vince Diestro



Vince Diestro
Philosophy 2
St. Joseph Seminary

As I returned from the Christmas break, St. Joseph Seminary had a silent retreat for all seminarians just before the winter semester began. This has always been the norm for us seminarians to start every new semester with a silent retreat to recollect ourselves and to settle in in preparation for the upcoming semester. In the recent silent retreat, I remember initially struggling with cultivating an interior silence in the sense that I was still in “vacation mode”, having many candid and random thoughts swirling around. But after some time, I was able to gather myself and began to develop an interior quietness. What I realized in the midst of this silence was that I was able to enter into a state of reflection in a way that there had been many thoughts I had set aside a long time ago only for them to arise again in a time where I could be intentional in giving time to contemplate and reflect on them. Of course, this was supplemented with prayer during this silent retreat but it gave me a deeper appreciation of what silence brings to our lives in the midst of a busy world.

We all live busy lives, and we can often get lost in the busyness of the world that we don’t give ourselves the much-needed time to settle our minds down and to give time for reflection. Giving time for silence opens the doors for us to reflect on our lives in such a way that it teaches us to appreciate the gifts we receive daily. I remember reflecting back on my

Christmas break during this silent retreat being overwhelmed with joy realizing how blessed I was to spend time with my friends and family over the break and the core memories made.

Having this interior posture of silence also relates to the importance of incorporating silence in our spiritual lives. “Silence is God’s first language” as St. John of the Cross says and we should acknowledge that prayer is not always this amazing and moving experience where God always responds and speaks to us. We are invited to enter into a relationship with the Lord and to trust in Him in the silence we might experience in prayer. Sometimes God may choose to remain “silent”, but the Lord in this moment could perhaps be calling us to simply dwell in His presence, to stay with Him, and “to be still and know that [He] is God!” (Psalm 46:10). The late Pope Benedict XVI once said that “God speaks in silence, but we must know how to listen.” Silence plays a crucial role in nourishing our faith in God in prayer especially in times where we feel our time for prayer has been “dry” or “empty”. Silence is important in both our material and spiritual lives—in our thoughts when we reflect on our lives and in times of prayer. With much thought and deliberation, incorporating silence can pave the way for us to live a life more simply by growing in self-awareness and most importantly growing closer to God in faith!

Reflection from Christopher Pugh



Christopher Pugh
Theology 3
St. Joseph Seminary

Throughout my discernment to enter the seminary, and even before I began to seriously discern the seminary, I have been involved in the Knights of Columbus. I owe a great amount of gratitude to the Knights as they have helped me in my discernment process, and I can definitely say that they have played a large role in my decision to enter the seminary. I have been blessed to have been part of several councils and assemblies, and have held executive positions in both the 3rd and 4th degree. I have met so many wonderful men and their families through the Knights and cannot say enough how thankful I am to many of these people.

As a member of some very active councils, I was given freedom to begin new programs, help out at countless events, raise money for some wonderful charities, and grow in fraternity with other Catholic gentlemen. This may sound like I am trying to advertise for the Knights, which is not my goal here, but I just wanted to take this opportunity to thank them so much for all they have given me in my life. Through prayers, financial contributions, opportunities, and friendships, I cannot begin to thank my many friends enough for all they have done for me.

I remember my time in Brandon, Winnipeg, and Kitchener-Waterloo and all the different people I met, and as I began to discern the priesthood more seriously, the encouragement and support I received from

these men and from their families was unbelievable, it was truly a blessing. I think I can say that if I had not been in the Knights of Columbus with these great people, I may not be in the seminary today. Seeing such faith filled people working in a charitable way in union with the Church has had a profound effect on my own journey, and I am so happy to have had the opportunity to walk alongside so many faithful men. From e-waste drives, pro-life activities, fraternal dinners, highway cleanups, Valentine's day galas, faith formation programs, school fairs, and yes, even meetings, and so much more, I have learned much that I know I will carry into the priesthood if God calls me to be ordained one day.

Charity, Unity, Fraternity, and Patriotism, the Knights of Columbus' guiding principles, offer so much and I have seen these being lived out by the councils and assemblies with which I have been associated. These principles have offered me something to meditate with, and help guide me on how I can grow in order to be a good Catholic gentleman myself. So once again, I would just like to thank the Knights of Columbus for all the support you have offered me over the years, and I am so happy that I am a member of this great organization. I look forward to being a member for many years to come, and hopefully one day will be able to be a chaplain!

God Bless and Vivat Jesus!

Prepared by the seminarians of the Archdiocese of Winnipeg

Please direct any questions or comments to Communication Services, Archdiocese of Winnipeg

communications@archwinnipeg.ca

(204)452-2227 ext. 225