

Dear Friends in Christ:

Among the more frightening passages in the Gospels is this one from the 11th chapter of St. John:

Then after this he said to his disciples,

“Let us go back to Judea.”

The disciples said to him,

*“Rabbi, the Jews were just trying to stone you,
and you want to go back there?”*

Being the realistic characters they were, the disciples weren't interested in being involved in any more run-ins between Jesus and the leaders of the Jews.

(An important note here: The Gospel of John frequently uses the term, “the Jews.” St. John is not – is not – using it in a universal way, as if **all** the Jews were involved or to blame for the persecution and false conviction of Jesus. John uses it to speak about the leadership of the Jews in Jerusalem – mainly the Pharisees and Sadducees.)

Being disciples of the Lord means that we will, at times, be led to follow Him into difficulty. While this goes against our human instinct for self-preservation, it does call forth a response founded in faith.

While I was in Macon a family at Holy Spirit parish, the Keihls, made a decision after much prayer to take themselves and their whole family – then consisting for 5 children under 10 years old, and become full-time missionaries. They sold everything, signed up with The Family Missions Company based in Louisiana, and go. Go? Their first assignment was to a desperately poor region in northern Mexico where electricity and water were in short supply, where priests were able to visit only occasionally, and where the overall living conditions were, to put it mildly, pretty basic.

The reports of read of their ministry over the last 7 years are stories of incredible joy and fulfillment. And their family has continued to grow – they now have seven missionary children.

Trusting in God's providence is a constant challenge, even with the relatively minor discomforts that we encounter with the effects of the pandemic. God never once promised us that being faithful would give us comfortable lives, full bank accounts, hundreds of friends, and full bellies. He did tell us very pointedly that, in following Him, we must pick up our crosses daily.

After it was evident that Jesus was going to Judea, Thomas, the Doubter, said with resignation, *“Let us also go to die with him.”* It's a terrible

thought, and most of us won't be put in a position to accept martyrdom. But we will be called in to do what we can for others in this struggle against spreading the coronavirus.

Remember, playdates for the kids, stopping by the bar for a beer or two, sneaking over to a friends' house for coffee with "a few" buddies, etc. – all of these are, right now bad ideas. Don't give the virus a chance to use to as a vector to others, especially those with already compromised health.

The life you save may be your own – or someone else's.

Lastly, I want to thank those who have switched to online giving or the use of Bill Pay through their banks or have dropped an offertory envelope off at the church or mailed in a check. If you have not doe so, please make your donations to our parish as soon as possible.

Peace and Blessings,

Fr Michael J. Kavanaugh

Pastor

Prayer of St. John Henry Newman

May the Lord support us all the day long,
Till the shades lengthen and the evening comes,
And the busy world is hushed,
And the fever of life is over and our work in done.
Then, in His mercy, may he give us a safe lodging,
And holy rest, and peace at the last.

AMEN