

The Cost of Discipleship

In 1937, *The Cost of Discipleship* by a German Lutheran pastor, Dietrich Bonhoeffer, was published. The book reflected on the Sermon on the Mount, and the demands it outlined led to Bonhoeffer's arrest and eventual death at the hands of the Nazis. It can be very dangerous to be faithful to Jesus' way of life. This shouldn't surprise us. Jesus' teaching cost Jesus his life.

Though the Gospel reading does not provide us with a program of action, it repeats Jesus' charge to take up our cross and follow him. This cross is different for each of us; it makes very personal demands. We are called to lose our life for his sake. This was true at the time of Jesus; it is true today.

This was true at the time of the prophet Jeremiah as well. He was called to proclaim God's word to his own people. They would not listen. Instead, "I am an object

of laughter; / everyone mocks me" (Jeremiah 20:7). The prophet wants relief from his prophetic responsibility. Who wouldn't? What follows is quite moving. He makes up his mind that he will stop talking about God—but he can't. "It [the word of God] is as if fire is burning in my heart... / I grow weary holding back" (Jeremiah 20:9). That is the cost Jeremiah had to pay. The cross was the cost Jesus paid. And what of us?

—Sr. Dianne Bergant, CSA

FOR Reflection

- What is the cost of discipleship for you?
- What in your life might be the cross you are being asked to bear?

Jesus said to his disciples,
"Whoever wishes to come after
me must deny himself, take up his
cross, and follow me."

MATTHEW 16:24



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