

Following Jesus Will Cause Conflict

This Week's Readings at Mass

- 2 Kings 4:8-11, 14-16 • Elisha and the Shunammite woman
- Romans 6:3-4, 8-11 • Death to sin, life in God
- Matthew 10:37-42 • Conditions and rewards of discipleship

The Gospel reading today is a continuation of last week's instructions to the apostles as Jesus sends them out to expand his work of healing, teaching, and driving out demons. The first half of the reading contains some solemn teachings: disciples must love Jesus more than their own families, and they must be willing to lose their lives in to find it.

It is easy for us to get defensive or upset about being asked to love Jesus more than our parents or our children. Yet what Jesus was asking wasn't a new teaching in his tradition, a tradition which emphasized that one must follow God before one's parents. We should be clear that Jesus is *not* telling us it is wrong to love our family or that we should love them less than we do.

What he *is* saying is that sometimes following him will create conflict within our families. We should expect resistance and breaks in some relationships if we are faithful to what Jesus is asking of us. In those



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"Whoever receives you, receives me, and whoever receives me receives the one who sent me."

Sheepish Question:
How have I been blessed by the hospitality of another? How did I express my gratitude?

times, we will lose the life as we know it to be faithful to him. Still today, it is not unusual for there to be family conflict when one person begins to deepen in his or her faith commitment while others around them don't. Ask any parish RCIA director, and she can tell you stories of how painful it is for catechumens to become Catholic when their family disagrees or even disowns them for their faith in Jesus. Yet all of them who go through with it do so because they believe they are "finding" new life despite losing their old life.

Questions of the Week

- 1 Has your faith ever caused disagreements or conflicts with loved ones? Please share.
- 2 Share about something you have "lost" in your life because of your faith, and also about how your faith has helped you to find new life.

