

Letting Go Eighteenth Week in Ordinary Time Friday, August 11, 2017 8:15 AM
Dt 4:32-40; **Mt 16:24-28** St. Clare, virgin (The key to happiness is letting go of what we know, letting go what we have, letting God's promises lead us and guide us.)

“Whoever wishes to come after me must deny himself, take up his cross, and follow me.”

Now it is true that these are probably not the exact words of Jesus since the use of the word “cross” prior to his crucifixion would not have been comprehensible. But it is the thought that he taught with his whole life, namely, that **we have be willing to let go in order to gain, let go of life as we know it, let go of the self as we know it.**

And that is very difficult because for all of us in a different way what we know is better than what we don't know. **We tend to be afraid of the unknown.** We tend to be afraid of what we can't see or touch or taste. So this is an adventure into the unknown, and it is actually scary. In some cases it's utterly frightening. **Yet we have not only the life of Jesus but the apostles and all the saints.** Today we remember St. Clare. These men and women have all gone through the process of life. The saints are those who have done this in a particularly open, public way. We celebrate the fact that they have found the key to happiness. And according to this particular gospel, **the key to happiness is letting go of what we know, letting go what we have, letting God's promises lead us and guide us.**

And that is, in the context of this particular gospel, what faith must mean. **Faith must mean letting go,** surrendering to what is beyond us, not seeing clearly exactly what's involved. That's why St. Paul said, “We walk by faith, not by sight.” We prefer to walk by sight. We prefer to know what we are getting into. We prefer to have contracts with all the details settled. But this is not what life is really all about. **Life is about mystery and life is about wonder and life is about the incomprehensible.** We are in it, we are involved in it, we are part of it, but often a frightened part. Jesus' gospel is about letting go of the fear and letting God lead us. It involves suffering, yes, but that is not the last word. The last word is life.