

*Reminders and Resources for the fall 2025 Homily Series*

**Marks of Discipleship II**

Week One — Perseverance

**A disciple** is someone who intentionally follows a particular teacher, and in our case that teacher is Jesus of Nazareth. As students of Jesus, we commit to learning from his life and teachings in hopes of becoming more like him.

**Perseverance** is defined as persistence over time; tenacity despite setbacks; and overcoming obstacles to reach set goals. Sometimes it means carrying on even though there is little to no evidence that one will succeed.

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Gospel Connection (Luke 18:1-8): Jesus shares a story about a persistent widow. She was seeking justice regarding a situation yet the judge, known for being unfair, kept refusing her petition. This widow did not give up and eventually the judge granted her request. With this example Jesus tries to encourage his disciples to persevere, to not lose heart, to keep praying to God. For if a dishonest judge will deliver a just decision, **imagine what our loving God will do!**

Why We Need Perseverance:

**1. To help us grow.** To live as a Christian is counter-cultural — we are asked to do things like forgive our enemies, to live selflessly for others, and to put things like generosity and compassion above material wealth. God may ask us to change our hearts. We may be challenged to attune to God's will over our own. Yet the slow work of conversion means turning toward Love again and again, one day at a time. As we develop the virtue of perseverance, we will grow into better versions of ourselves.

**2. To help us handle difficulties.** The harsh reality is that we may actually suffer more at times because we are Christians, because we have chosen a path of self-denial, a path that demands we respond to the suffering in the world, a path that can lead to persecution. So the question is not "Will there be a storm?" rather it is "Am I prepared for it?" We get ready for the storms of life by cultivating perseverance, by facing even minor challenges with trust in God. As we exercise our "perseverance muscles," we anchor ourselves in a faith that helps us handle difficulties we are bound to encounter.

**3. To bless one another.** Perseverance is driven by a purpose. It requires effort toward an important goal. For Jesus, his purpose was to unveil the love of God. In doing so, he faced opposition, mockery, threats, and abandonment. Yet he was clear on his mission and he persevered, which has blessed the world immeasurably. So too can we bless one another by enduring the challenges that come with the callings in our lives. This can look very different from person to person, but the principle is the same. Perseverance is about the long game, wherein we trust in the grace that is to follow, and that grace will surely bless others.

**Challenge:** Reflect upon a time when you had to endure a situation that required either sacrifice or hardship (or both), or that was met with obstacles, but it led to a greater good in time, blessing others. **Share that story** of perseverance with another.

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*"I have walked that long road to freedom. I have tried not to falter; I have made missteps along the way. But I have discovered the secret that after climbing a great hill, one only finds that there are many more hills to climb. I have taken a moment here to rest, to steal a view of the glorious vista that surrounds me, to look back on the distance I have come. But I can only rest for a moment, for with freedom comes responsibilities, and I dare not linger, for my long walk is not ended."* — Nelson Mandela

*"We always find that those who walked closest to Christ were those who had to bear the greatest trials."* — St. Teresa of Avila

*"...proclaim the word; be persistent whether it is convenient or inconvenient..."*  
- St. Paul (2 Timothy 4:2)

*"Courage doesn't always roar. Sometimes courage is the quiet voice at the end of the day saying, 'I will try again tomorrow.'"* — Mary Anne Radmacher

*"The best way out is always through."* —Robert Frost

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For further reading:

- Pope: Perseverance is necessary for prayer — article on Pope Francis: <https://www.ncronline.org/vatican/pope-perseverance-necessary-prayer>
  - The Principle of Perseverance — article on AA wisdom: <https://www.jasonwahler.com/12-principles-of-aa/principle-ten-of-aa-alcoholics-anonymous-perseverance>
  - Life is Messy — book by Matthew Kelly: <https://www.matthewkelly.com/life-is-messy>
  - The Book of Job — found in the Bible: <https://bible.usccb.org/bible/job/0>
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### **Prayer to Run the Race Well**

*(adapted from BibleStudyTools.com)*

*Loving God, Thank you for giving us lives that can be used to glorify you and serve others. We know this life will be full of opportunities for us to fail, fall down, and refuse to get back up and finish running the race...Our flesh is weak, and there are many earthly reasons to just live for ourselves. Lord, we ask you to keep us strong. Help us to endure... When things seem like they're going well, help us to not grow complacent. When things are hard, empower us not to grow weary. Let us praise you in all circumstances, that we may keep our eyes fixed on you, and **persevere**. Amen.*