Spirituality
Pencil Preaching



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“To one who has, more will be given” (Mark 4:23).

Memorial of Saints Timothy and Titus, Bishops

2 Tm 1:1-8; Mk 4:21-25

One of the challenges facing the church today ahead of the 2023 Synod is the invitation to be transparent. Until the clerical church and bishops can be transparent about sins against chastity and lack of accountability, real encounters with the faithful that inspire mutual trust will be difficult.

Full candor is a prerequisite for repentance and forgiveness. How many victims still wait for acknowledgement and justice? Old secrets and policies that protected clergy will only continue to foster distrust that will undermine Pope Francis' vision of a synodal church.

Paul's letters to Timothy and Titus urged them to be models for what they preached. They were public figures before their faith communities, so they could not hide themselves. Let the light of faith shine as you guide others. Be transparent and accountable, and you will be effective leaders.

Today's Gospel, almost Zen-like in its brevity and depth, is for all disciples. If we want to follow Jesus we must first let him kindle a light in us that is meant to be shared. Do not pray for it if you do not intend to let it shine.

Listen carefully: The measure with which you measure will be measured out to you. If you sow small, you will reap small. If you give yourself away, you will become your real self in full measure. God loves a generous giver, and those who empty themselves will be refilled again and again to overflowing.

Finally, know that those who respond to this gift of discipleship will multiply their capacity to share it. Anyone willing to take the first step will see the whole road open up to them, and their lives will become a journey of ever increasing joy. But, those who stand at the threshold but do not cross it will find their lives empty of meaning, and even what little they thought they had will fade away.

Our first "yes" to God is not the end of the journey, but the beginning. Jesus told his disciples not to take up the plow and look back. Count the cost of discipleship and set out confidently, for God will walk with you, one yes at a time, little by little, step by step, until your joy is complete.