

When I was in high school, I had to share our family van with my brother and sister - it was a full-sized Ford van - two tones of brown - tinted windows - no such things as backup cameras in the 80's - you basically said a prayer and put in reverse - whatever cool was in the early 90's, this van was not it - one of my brother's many talents is driving a vehicle just far enough that he arrived home running on fumes - every time I used the vehicle after my brother, the first thing I had to do was spend my money getting gas - I actually did run out of gas once - so because of this, I became very good at mooching rides from friends in high school

As a priest, this skill has come in handy - no seriously - the people of God have been very generous to me - and it seems like this has been true even in the Old Testament times

In the first reading we hear about the generosity of a woman and her husband in Shunem - the prophet Elisha would often stop at their house and get a free meal - I think I've mentioned this before, but there was a stretch when I lived in Rochester before becoming a priest that I went seven months without going to the grocery store - between eating at work, eating out, and eating at friends' houses, I didn't need to go

So this woman and her husband built a room for Elisha to stay in when he visited their home - in return, Elisha promises her that even though she has been childless and getting up in years, she will soon have a son - God is never outdone in generosity

The ultimate example is the Cross - in the second reading, in the letter of St. Paul to the Romans, St. Paul asks them, "Are you unaware that we who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death?" - St. Paul goes on to say that if we have been baptized into Christ's death, we, through Christ's resurrection, we will have newness of life

This morning at the Newman Center we will be welcoming Adaline Kathleen Weidner into the family of God - she will be baptized into Christ's death so that she can rise with Him to new life

What does this newness of life look like? - St. Paul says we must think of ourselves as dead to sin and living for God in Christ Jesus - are we doing this?

We live in a culture that normalizes sin - abortion, same-sex attracted sexual acts, pornography, not caring for the stranger or immigrant - we must call upon the grace of our Baptism to die to our sins and live for God in Christ Jesus

I realize that what I've just said isn't necessarily political, but in our hyper-sensitive culture right now, it can come across that way - however, we cannot look to our political parties to tell us what is right or wrong - we must look to Christ

In the Gospel, Jesus tells His Apostles, "Whoever loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me, and whoever loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me"

This is a pretty bold statement - Jesus is not saying we shouldn't love our family - Jesus is using a hyper example to show that we must give our allegiance to God first of all and above all

I was playing tennis this past week - I lost the third set tie-breaker 12-10 - if you know anything about tennis, you know that is a pretty tight score - however, when looking back over it, I realized I played not to lose instead of playing to win

What are we willing to risk in order to follow Jesus Christ, to take up our crosses as our Savior showed us? - Are we willing to risk family? - are we willing to risk friends? - are we willing to risk political parties or political correctness? - are we willing to lose our life for Jesus Christ? - if so, then, and only then, will we find our lives

The woman and her husband in the first reading welcomed Elisha the prophet into their home - are we going to welcome Jesus Christ into our souls, into our hearts?

Jesus wants to be a guest in our hearts - are we going to make room for Him?