

AUG 29/30, 2026 - 22nd SUNDAY YEAR A
Jeremiah 20:7-9 Romans 12:1-2 Matthew 16:21-27

My dear brothers and sisters,

I welcome you all with joy to this Eucharistic celebration.

Today Jesus says something very direct: **"If anyone wants to come after me, let him deny himself, take up his cross and follow me."**

Last Sunday, Peter got an A+. He said, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." Jesus blessed him.

This Sunday, the same Peter gets an F. When Jesus says he must go to Jerusalem to suffer and die, Peter says, "This cannot happen!" And Jesus replies, "Get behind me, Satan!"

Why? Because Peter wanted a Christianity without a cross. And many of us want the same.

We want to be Christians, but we want to cut our cross short.

Let me share a story from my village in Africa.

A rich grandfather was dying. He had three grandsons far away. He sent word: "Each of you, go to the forest, cut a long log, carry it across the river to my house. Whoever arrives first will have my wealth."

The first grandson cut a log, but said, "Too heavy." He cut it in half.

The second said, "Even half is heavy." He cut it to a small stick.

The third said, "Grandfather said a long log. I will carry it as it is." It was heavy. It hurt his shoulders. But he carried it.

At the river, there was no bridge.

The first brother tried to put his half log across — too short.

The second tried with his small stick — too short.

The third put his long, heavy log across — it became a bridge. He crossed and received the inheritance.

My dear friends, the lesson is clear:

**The log is our CROSS — our Christian responsibility.
The wealth is the eternal joy of heaven.**

God gives each of us a long log:
Our marriage, our priesthood, our honesty, our forgiveness, our prayer, our studies.

But we are tempted to cut it:

"I will be a Christian, but I will not forgive that person."

"I will go to Church, but I will not stop gossip."

"I will marry, but when children disturb me, I will neglect them."

"I will go to school, but I will not do my assignments."

Today Jesus invites us: Do not cut your cross. Carry it fully. That cross that you are trying to avoid will become your bridge to heaven.

Let us ask the Blessed Virgin Mary and St. Bavo, our patron, to help us carry our responsibilities to 100%, so that at the end of our journey, we may attain eternal glory.