

June 19, 2016 No Guts No Glory Homily:

Brothers and sisters, posted on the walls of many locker rooms, where athletes undergo intensive training, is an appealing motto, which reads "No guts, no glory". The sober words can also be seen emblazoned on t-shirts worn by those in training. The athlete needs to be reminded that nothing worthwhile is ever achieved easily. Simply recall the training regimen of Rocky Balboa in the academy award winning film, "Rocky".

Preparing for the heavyweight championship in boxing requires rigorous training, painful endurance and grim determination to succeed. The lack of sound training usually results in disaster. A lazy athlete pays the consequences!

In today's gospel (Lk. 9: 18-25), Jesus confirms his identity as a servant-messiah who has to suffer before entering into glory. Christians, in turn, are invited to imitate Christ in his sufferings and humiliation. The way of the disciple continues the path walked by the Master. Discipleship is demanding! No guts, no glory!

In his reflections on today's gospel reading, Pope Francis asks the members of his congregation (and us, too) a pointed question Are you a comfort Christian? What is lacking in the "comfort" Christian is "the anointing of the cross, the anointing of humiliation". A true disciple is one who follows Christ to the bitter end, to the mystery of the cross!

The evangelist Luke has in mind a lesson for all who will set out to follow Jesus. The Christian must take up his or her cross every day and thus imitate the one who willingly accepted it.

What will my cross (and yours) be like? No one knows! But it will come and we must pray for the grace not to run away from the cross when it appears!

Amen!