

AUGUST 2 2025 MSGR. DAVID REILANDER

The cost of discipleship—the cost of being a missionary.

Pope Francis has called us to be missionary disciples of Jesus Christ. Not necessarily to leave everything behind and become professional missionaries, but to be missionaries right where we are: to our families, our workplaces, our schools, our neighbours, and our friends.

In other words, we are to be Catholics who are always looking to the good of the Gospel.

And if we do that—well, being realistic—there are consequences. Not all of them are positive.

In today's Gospel, we see John the Baptist promoting Jesus, his cousin—proclaiming him as the Christ—and acting in a just and righteous way. As we heard in the book of Leviticus, we are called to be just with our neighbour. And so John challenged Herod, pointing out that what he was doing with Herodias was not a lawful marriage in the eyes of the Lord. It was sinful. John was urging him to make things right with God.

Then we have that well-known scene: Herod's stepdaughter dances and pleases everyone. Herod, caught up in the moment, promises, "Whatever you want, I will do." And she asks for the head of John the Baptist—an unthinkable request that Herod grants.

The cost of discipleship.

For John the Baptist, it meant death. For many of the apostles—Peter, Paul, James, and others—it also meant death. Most of us will not be called to face martyrdom in the physical sense. But we may face other kinds of death: the death of the ego, the loss of comfort, the pain of being misunderstood or ridiculed.

Sometimes, when we want to promote Jesus Christ, we're met with resistance. We're ignored, mocked, or even criticized by others. That too is a cost of discipleship.

So we ask ourselves: What are we willing to do for the sake of the Gospel? For the glory of the Most Holy Trinity? That takes great courage. And the truth is, many of us don't have that courage on our own.

We need the grace of God. It is God who makes us capable of such witness.

Being a missionary disciple is difficult work. It means constantly watching ourselves—resisting sin, choosing virtue, following the Gospel. It means being kind, forgiving, loving toward others.

And let's be honest: not everyone is easy to love. Forgiving can be exceedingly difficult, especially when we've been hurt deeply. Sometimes it takes time. Sometimes we have to go through a process before we're able to love or forgive.

But the key is to try—to put in the effort, to ask God for help.

And so today, we pray:

Lord, give me the grace of courage, prudence, strength, and counsel,
to be able to promote you,
and to live as your disciple,
as John the Baptist did.