

Ordinary 23C

- I am Dcn Frank T – St. C Deacon for the last year, but not on SATURDAY
 - On SAT I served as a Prison Chaplain
 - But I've just left that job – and now I can be with you!
 - A few weeks ago I introduced myself to the 4, and now its your turn
- Before I was assigned to St Catherin's I served for 7 years as a missionary in the Bahamas
 - The news about the destructive hurricane in the Bahamas hit home with me
 - Abaco and Grand Bahamas were crushed and I contacted friends to find out details
 - I did a parish mission on Abaco so I know that island – destruction is massive.
 - There was a huge Haitian shanty town there and I know it was destroyed.
 - Before the hurricane they were offered transport to shelters – **there was a plan**
 - Those that followed the plan, went to the shelter, lived – those that didn't, died
- In today's Gospel Jesus speaks about discipleship – and He has a plan too.
 - He uses two examples – a man who uses his smarts to build a tower – or not.
 - A King who decides whether to go to war – or not
 - They both make a plan, like the Bahamians did – and using their smarts, they succeed – or not.
 - What Jesus is saying is:
 - **To be my disciple, the same intelligence we use to make worldly decisions**
 - **Should also be used in the spiritual life.**

So what's the plan?

- (1) We need to protect ourselves from evil AND (2) We need to do things to stay spiritually strong
- In the Bahamas, they had shelters ready for protection AND they fortified them to stay safe
- In the Spiritual Life we need to protect ourselves by avoiding the “occasion of sin” **What's that?**
 - Anything, or anyone that makes it easier for us to sin is and “occasion of sin”
 - If someone we know brags about his sin – that's it!
 - If we know of a party where people always drink to much – that's it!
 - If we know when this group of people gather, they'll gossip – that's it!
 - If you know of an 'occasion of sin' in your life – GET RID OF IT
 - Now these are defensive things we can do to protect ourselves
 - Second – we need to consider what we can DO to stay spiritually strong (go on the offense)
 - We need a plan on how to become better Christians, better Catholics
 - Not just by avoiding things – but by doing things
 - SO WHAT'S YOUR PLAN?
 - How are we going to make Jesus' presence more of a reality in our lives?
 - Just as the Bahamians fortified the hurricane shelters WE need Spiritual Fortifications
 - Prayer, Scripture, Spiritual Reading, Christian Charity (Action)
 - Take part in being fed – Eucharist, Bible Studies, FORMED, et.al.
 - And when we fall – Confession
- Today's message is clear – God's given us intelligence – USE IT
 - We ARE engaged in a battle
 - BUT the Power of Christ IS with us
 - With Christ the devil does not stand a chance
 - Jesus is the Victor – He already won on Calvary – He will win in Norwood
 - May we have the courage to join Him in the battle and THEN share in His victory