

23 Sun. '25 #C Waupaca

- **Once was a man named Frank. He had difficulty making the right choices. If he had to choose between two stock options, his choice always failed. Choice between two cars, his choice was a lemon. He had to go on a business trip and when he went down to the Waupaca International Airport he was relieved to find out that there was only one flight to where he needed to go. He was enjoying the flight when the pilot announced that the plane was experiencing trouble and might crash so he asked everyone to pray. Frank decided to pray to his patron saint, Francis. Deep voice said: “are you praying to Francis of Assisi or Francis Xavier?”**
- **Life is filled with choices. Most of them are of the everyday variety, but some are more substantial. All of our choices form the person we become. When it comes to our life of faith, to our relationship with Jesus, He sets a pretty high bar for the choices we are to make. E.g., sometimes our choices will go beyond our familiar or familial connections; sometimes our choices will require us to face the crucibles of life rather than running away or numbing them; sometimes our choices will reflect our belief and trust that we are made in the image of God but also the acknowledgement that we are not God.**
- **Being a disciple means making choices. The word disciple comes from the Latin word “to choose.” A disciple is one who chooses to follow someone and become like that person. But it is important to remember that the word “discipline” comes from that same Latin word. I.e., holy and wholesome choices require that we will say “yes” to some options and “no” to other options. And to have the wisdom to make good options, we need to seek advice and counsel. We need a discerning spirit.**

- One of the first pieces of wisdom about choices that Pope Leo offered was to 1000's of young people gathered in Rome for World Youth Day. *Jesus is the friend who always accompanies us in the formation of our conscience. If you truly want to encounter the Risen Lord, then listen to His Word, which is the Gospel of salvation. Reflect on your way of living. Seek justice in order to build a more humane world. Serve the poor and so bear witness to the good that we would always like to receive from our neighbors. Be united with Jesus Christ in the Eucharist. Adore Christ in the Blessed Sacrament, the source of eternal life. Each time we adore Christ in the Eucharist, our hearts will be united in Him. Finally, my prayer for you is that you may persevere in faith with joy and courage. We can say thank you Jesus, for loving us. Stay with us.*
- The call to discipleship means that in our choices we ask ourselves: What is God asking of me? In my marriage. In my work. In my friendships. In my use of social media. In my response to tragedy. In my contribution to the common good.
- Indeed, being a disciple of Jesus is a daunting task. The words of Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Lutheran pastor martyred by the Nazis, are appropriate. "There is no cheap grace. Cheap grace is the grace we bestow on ourselves. Cheap grace is the preaching of forgiveness without requiring repentance. Cheap grace is baptism without church discipline. Cheap grace is communion without Church membership. Cheap grace is grace without discipleship, grace without the cross, grace without Jesus Christ, live and incarnate."
- So mind your choices. Indeed, it is truly a matter of life and death, here and in the hereafter.