

# Second Hand Preacher

*21<sup>st</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time*

August 21, 2016

**Hebrews 12:5-7, 11-13**

I enjoy working with pre-marriage couples. Everything is open for them as they try to plan their new life in Christ together. They look at how they will approach the world as a couple. As Catholics, we are to be open to life. That means many couples aspire to be parents. When they take the pre-marriage inventory, there is a whole section on parenting. The questions revolve around skills and decisions people need to explore before they parent. One that many couples find challenging is the question around discipline. Many times neither parent wants to be seen as the disciplinarian. They want to offer their children freedoms and make discipline something that is not seen as very important. I think it is so important for potential parents to have a good conversation around this where they make a plan. Perhaps it doesn't have to be a plan where one parent is seen as a villain; but somehow discipline must enter into the plan of raising children to become responsible adults.

The author to the Hebrews believes in discipline. Having children conform to a moral code would have been the formula to raising a good Jewish boy or girl. The author encourages his readers to recall the discipline of their youth. To remember how they learned was a good exercise in how they were to be a Christian as an adult. There were certainly times of pain resulting from discipline when one realizes they aren't always getting their way. Hopefully later on the children can look back and see why they were disciplined. The Hebrews were to take the lessons of their youth and apply it to the law of Christ. This is a law of love, but one must sacrifice in order to enjoy the fruits of a life with Jesus.

We are called to live that same discipline. There are the Ten Commandments; but it is even more important to carry them a step further and apply the teaching of Jesus, which uses the commandments as a starting point but leads the disciple into a deeper connection with Jesus and the community. Christianity is not a spectator sport. The law of love must enter into every aspect of our lives. We are to be people totally committed to Jesus. Being good ourselves is not enough; we are to encourage the whole community to live in goodness. All of us have the opportunity to grow in knowledge, love, and discipline.