

# Becoming Intentional Disciples -

Fr Raniero Cantalamessa once said: “If we want to evangelize a secularized world, there is a choice to make. Where do we begin? The immense wealth of doctrine and institutions can become a handicap if we are trying to present all of that to a person who has lost all contact with the Church and no longer knows who Jesus is.

It is necessary to help this person establish a relationship with Jesus. We need to do what Peter did on the day of Pentecost, when 3,000 people were present: to speak about Jesus whom we have crucified and whom God has raised and to bring that person to the point that he or she, cut to the heart, asks, “Brethren, what shall we do?” (Acts 2:37). We will respond as Peter does, “Repent, and be baptized every one of you” (Acts 2:38) if you have not been baptized, or if you have already been baptized, go to confession.

Those who respond to the proclamation will join themselves – today as in that day- to the community of believers. They will listen to the teaching of the Apostles and will partake in the breaking of the bread.

Depending on each person’s calling and response, little by little they will be able to make the immense heritage arising from the kerygma their own. Jesus is not accepted on the word of the Church, but the Church is accepted on the word of Jesus.” Our primary task when someone has reached the threshold of seeking is to help him or her focus on the person of Jesus and the central challenges of the kerygma. But this not just a “me and Jesus” mindset.

Jesus is encountered in the context of the Church and of one’s own parish. Crossing the **threshold of seeking and intentional discipleship** means actively wrestling with and seriously contemplating the following of Christ. When an individual crosses the line into active seeking, things really start to change. When large numbers of parishioners are actively seeking or are disciples, the spiritual atmosphere in the parish heats up dramatically. To enter into the threshold of seeking requires a certainty that a personal relationship with God is possible. Seeking feels like a quest. The seeker seeks Jesus Christ and not just God in a general sense or as the “divine”, an “impersonal force”, or a “Higher Power”. Seeking is centred on the possibility of committing oneself to follow Jesus as his disciple. Seekers realize that following Christ has personal implications: It will make real demands on their priorities, time, money, relationships, and all other areas of life. They grasp the fact that discipleship is not just “fire insurance”, nor is it mere “mental assent” to a few religious ideas or values. A person reaches the moment where – with complete freedom – he or she chooses to become a real follower of Christ. Let’s pray that all of us may fully commit ourselves to fostering a deep, personal relationship with Jesus and follow Him.