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Little Jenny was misbehaving and really giving her mother a hard time. The mother told her to go sit in the corner and wait until her father got home. She went over and stood in the corner but refused to sit. After another hassle, the mother literally forced the child to sit down. When the father came in, he asked what she was doing sitting in the corner. She said, 'Well, on the outside I'm sitting down but inside I'm still standing.' *It's the same with us – on the outside we could appear catholic but on the inside it may be a different story.*

Last Sunday Jesus told us to take the lowest place, the Sunday before he told us to enter by the narrow door and today he is asking us to put Him first in our lives – even before family and friends. Family accord is important but will be rather superficial if not built on a shared family faith.

Like the man building the tower Jesus asked us to first sit down and work out what it would cost us to follow him more radically. In our everyday lives we often say, 'spending extra on a thing of quality is often a more sensible decision than going for the cheaper option. In the long run it's worth spending the extra few quid'.

We should apply the same philosophy to our relationship with God. A more ardent following of Jesus will mean that we'll be strong enough to see things through. There will be no half built towers. When contemplating Christian marriage, for instance, have we got what it takes to take on board the 'highs and the lows', the 'ups and downs' of the married vocation? If we opt for ordination or religious profession have we got the wherewithal to stick to our guns? God doesn't want us to make hasty life-changing decisions which we haven't properly thought out. Like the man who half built the tower, we may have started off well but flagged when the going got tough. That's hardly putting the Lord first in our lives. Like I said to someone recently, it's not how you start off in life but how you finish which is the important

thing.

The onlookers started making fun of the man who left the tower half built. This could be one of the reasons why 'Fr Ted' was so popular – it portrayed Catholicism as a joke which no one, not even the clergy were taking seriously. Or we might have taken it seriously at first but then had second thoughts when people poked fun at our catholic faith or peer pressure got the better of us or the school bullies got to us. That's hardly giving the Lord pride-of-place in our lives. Jesus says, “he who is not with me is against me” and that means with him in everything with no exceptions.

Loyalty to our catholic faith should inform everything we do and say. It will be well worth the effort when we reach the end of life's journey. Our tower will be fully built.