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There was a lady walking through a Park and she thought she heard somebody following close behind her. She got a bit nervous, turned round and there was a young man. She said: 'Why are you following me'? He replied, 'because I am infatuated by you. You are the most beautiful person I have every seen. And she said, 'But if you turn around you'll see my younger sister and she is much more beautiful than I am.' And he turned round quickly and there was no one there. "Are you mocking me", he said. And she answered, ' If you were sincere in what you said to me, you would not have looked around to find my younger sister.'

We can so easily become side-tracked in our following of Jesus. **There are people** who initially promise our Lord the earth but in the cauldron of life those promises turn out to be hollow. **On the other hand** there are people with little or no exposure to God or religion in their early days but later find a lively faith – just like the first son in the gospel today. We may have had a wobbly faith-start in life but how we finish is what really matters.

We are told that during **World War Two** the German Government controlled radio signals in such a way that people could only receive one station, which continually pumped out their twisted propaganda. All other stations were deliberately jammed.

We could be a bit like that when we use Our Lord's teaching selectively. When we find living up to our faith a bit taxing we might be tempted to change stations or switch off the radio altogether.

This could apply when, on their wedding day, couples promise to love each other for the rest of their lives. But then divorce rears its ugly head. Some people think the church has gone soft on divorce. Well, it hasn't, despite its prevalence today. It

undermines family life and is the last thing children need. The same could apply to baptismal promises which parents make on behalf of their baby.

Also inconsistent with the dignity of Christian marriage is when a couple mutually agree to withhold their fertility from each other for less than noble reasons. Last Tuesday we celebrated the feast day of St Paul VI who wrote the controversial encyclical Humanae Vitae in 1968 which was and is rejected by many Catholics and even clergy. However, as a consequence of its rejection all the dire predictions which St Paul VI warned us about 55 years ago have actually come true. To artificially disable your fertility, according to St John Paul II, is a "falsification of the inner truth of conjugal love". Added to that the spouses wedding day promises to each other become somewhat diluted – mirroring the second son in today's gospel.

A good example of a decisive yes to God was **Mary our Mother**. As a young person she acceded to become mother of God, saying to the Angel Gabriel, 'let what you have said be done to me'. Mary never vacillated on her 'yes' to God despite the many obstacles she had to face. When she said 'yes' she meant it.

*Today the Gospel **challenges us to be decisive** so that Our Lord can bank on us to be faithful, come what may. The person who stands firm to the end will be saved.*