Dear Friends,

Greetings!

The Theme of the recently concluded University Day Celebration of Central Philippine University is “CPU: A Paragon of Excellence.” Let me share a portion of the message that I preached before the start of the Foot Parade and Opening Celebration last August 30, 2012.

As we reflect on our U-Day Theme, let us ask ourselves this question, “Who is the very best example or the paragon of excellence that we can pattern our lives after?” The answer of course is our Lord Jesus Christ.

Paul in 1 Corinthians 11:1 says, “Imitate me as I imitate Christ.” In this passage, Paul is telling us to follow his example. What we should follow in Paul’s life is his commitment to imitate Jesus Christ.

We cannot defy the fact that human beings are imitators. We learn to talk and walk by imitating those around us. We follow people whom we respect and admire. We pattern our lives after our parents and even after sports people and famous celebrities.

But let us also realize that while we imitate others, there are also people who are imitating us. Some of us do not realize how our lives are influencing other people. There are people who are learning from us because they are observing what we are doing. This is the reason why Paul is telling us to be careful who we imitate because we have the power of influence on other people.

Paul patterned his life after the wrong people before. Now, he is imitating Jesus Christ, and he is giving us the message that we need to be imitators of Jesus.

First, if we want to imitate Jesus, we need to know who Jesus Christ is – his life, teachings and ministry. We can never imitate Jesus if we do not read the Bible. We can never follow in the footsteps of the Master and declare ourselves as disciples if we do not know who our Master is.

This is why it is imperative for all of us to read the Bible. This is why we must thank our Alma Mater – CPU, and those who are giving us the opportunity to know Jesus Christ. There are many who are out there in the world that is convincing us to follow and imitate them. We can only know if they are false prophets and teachers when we know the Scriptures well.

Second, if we want to imitate Jesus, we must deny ourselves, take up the cross daily and follow only Him.

It is not easy to follow Jesus. It is even dangerous. We need to learn the prayer of Jesus – “Thy will be done.” This means that the focus of our lives should be the will of God, and not our own. This is very difficult but it can be done by the grace of God.

Paul made his life an example for others to follow. He modeled Jesus Christ. Now, every one of us has the same responsibility. People are observing us. Every one of us can be an influence in someone’s life.

We should become a paragon of excellence. We must imitate Jesus.

May God bless us all!

Sincerely,

Rev. Francis Neil G. Jalando-on