

Homily for the 13th Sunday in Ordinary Time - Year C

St. Peter's 5:00 Sat/8:00/9:30/11:30 Sunday Masses - June 25/26, 2022

1 Kings 19:16-21 Psalm 16:1-11 Galatians 5:1,13-18 Luke 9:51-62

Total Commitment

Introduction

A chicken and a pig are talking about what they contribute to the farmer's life. The chicken says proudly that she provides eggs for the whole family. The pig doesn't say much for awhile, then finally says, "For you contributing to the farmer's bacon and eggs breakfast is a contribution. For me, it's a total commitment."

Discipleship and Commitment

Today's theme is about being a disciple of Jesus Christ. A disciple isn't just a Facebook follower. A disciple seeks to become like the one they follow. Our Christian religious talk doesn't make it sound easy to follow. Walk with Jesus. Act like Jesus. Love like Jesus. Be perfect like Jesus. Listen to Jesus. That's what Mary said at the wedding feast of Cana: "Do whatever he tells you." But if we listen to Jesus, we hear him say in one place, "You must be holy, even as your heavenly Father is holy." In another place, it sounds even harder when Jesus says, "You must be perfect, even as your heavenly Father is perfect." Jesus, Jesus, Jesus.

None of this sounds helpful if we want easy religion that makes us feel good all the time and never demands anything from us. Do we have to do what Jesus tells us ALL the time? Can't we take a break and watch TV sometimes?

St. Paul Warns About Self Indulgence

That kind of easy religion is promoted in many places. It's the religion of self indulgence. St. Paul says that God has given you freedom from indulging the desires of the flesh. That's what love does. It gives us the freedom to live that kind of a radical life of love. There is also the freedom to just let our physical desires take over. Paul says don't give that up to become a slave to your passions.

Granted that's not always easy, but the rewards for doing so are out of this world.

A Prophet's Calling

Elisha will leave everything to become the next major prophet of all Israel. This is not a minor calling that Elijah demands of him but somehow Elisha gets it. All he wants is to be able to kiss his father goodbye. That seems so reasonable. However He will dedicate his life, leaving behind his old life. He burns everything and sacrifices it. Following is about what we leave behind and also following. Jesus meets people who say they want to follow him. He tells them that they have to know it is a radical life. Jesus has only a short time left, so there isn't time.

The Mission of the Messiah

In the Gospel today, Jesus had his game face on. He was on his way to Jerusalem to fulfil his destiny. The phrase used is that he had set his face towards Jerusalem, to glory. Nothing could get in his way at that point. His disciples said, don't you remember the last time you were there, they wanted to kill you? But Jesus shows us the ultimate freedom. He says, "No one takes my life from me. I lay down my life freely. I am the Good Shepherd. I lay down my life for my sheep." They passed through a Samaritan town where the people did not welcome. That's always going to happen. People go places in Jesus name and get rejected.

Clearly, Jesus healed people and freed them from demons. He touched and loved and forgave hundreds of people, maybe thousands that aren't recorded in the Gospels. Those were all signs of the kingdom of heaven. Those were all glimpses into heavenly existence God made us for. But he didn't heal everyone. Not even in that small region where he walked. Not even close.

There was a point when he had to do the one thing he came to do. It was his purpose as the man who was also God. The God who was also human. He was on his way to the cross, to the resurrection, to heaven, to sending of the Holy Spirit on the Church, the same Spirit that is present with us today and wants to free us from slavery to sin.

Does this kind of religious life have no relaxation? Is there no fun allowed. Luke

tells us there is. Especially Luke. Jesus sits down to meals and has ordinary conversations with all kinds of people. In fact, the way someone put it is that Jesus eats his way through the Gospel of Luke. So eating and drinking and enjoying being with people is not contrary to our faith. Jesus laughed and danced at a wedding. Jesus touched people no one else would touch. He brought joy and wants to keep doing that for us in our sorrows and, even more, through us to others.

Call To Vocation

Is this a time for a radical shift to what God has in mind for me? Elisha had to make that decision. This prophetic calling was not a part time job. In fact, it was not a job at all. It was a radical acceptance of a permanent and faithful commitment to God. He was to make every moment of his life a response to that calling. There is really nothing like that in our lives. So, while some here today may be called to a radical vocation, most of us are called to center our lives in Christ and do our best to live that out in the places we live and move. Elijah was telling Elisha that there would no longer be any room in his life for personal relationships. Everything would be entirely for God.

Not everyone is called to that radical a life, but some are. We don't have to be Elisha, Mother Teresa or St. Francis. However, there is a calling, a vocation that we have been called to.

Bishop McGrattan recently spoke on St. Pope John Paul II's vision of the vocation of the laity (and really every Christian), which he called "the universal call to holiness." The Bishop provided two ways to live out that vocation.

First is the environment : Why do we have to care for it? The world tells us it is because the earth will stop supporting life if we don't. That's true and it is not the worst reason in the world. But we have a better reason. The first command to Adam was to be a steward of the garden. This is also our command to care for the whole of creation, which God has made. Our vocation in this regard is to safeguard what God has provided. There is no break from this vocation. There is no time when we can say it is ok to deliberately degrade the environment. We are

required to be all in, all the time. In this way it is as radical a calling as that of Elisha.

The second aspect of our radical vocation is our responsibility to our fellow man and woman. It is everywhere in Sacred Scripture. It is in the two great commandments that Jesus identifies. Love God. Love your neighbour. But love takes no breaks. There is no time when we can intentionally do harm to another person. It is a 100 per cent calling.

A non Jew once offered to become a proselyte if Hillel could teach him the law while he stood on one leg. The rabbi said to him: What you do not like, do not do to your neighbour. That is the entire law, and all the rest is commentary. St. Paul today repeats Jesus' message that the whole law regarding others is summed up in the one law to love one's neighbour, which is everyone.

What can we learn today? What do I need to leave behind if I am to follow God in the way he has set aside for me? Is it games or TV or gossip or judgment? Is it hard heartedness, an unwillingness to be a servant of God. We all have a calling to take on the identity God has given us. Sure it's hard, but with total dependence on the grace of God, not as hard as we might think. Sure it wants our total commitment, but it wants to give us back so much more.

Key Passages

Entrance Antiphon: *All peoples, clap your hands. Cry to God with shouts of joy!*

Collect: *O God, grant that we may not be wrapped in the darkness of error but always be seen to stand in the bright light of truth.*

1 Kings: *The Lord spoke to the Prophet Elijah: "You shall anoint Elisha as prophet in your place." Elijah passed by Elisha and threw his mantle over him. Elijah threw his mantle over Elisha, who said, "Let me kiss my father and mother, and then I will follow." Elijah said to him, "Go back again, for what have I done to you? Elisha took the yoke of the oxen, slaughtered them and using the equipment boiled their flesh and gave it to the people. Then Elisha set out and followed Elijah, and became his servant.*

Psalm: *Protect me, O God, for in you I take refuge. I have no good apart from you. I keep the Lord always before me. I shall not be moved. Therefore my heart is glad and my soul rejoices. For you do not give me up to Sheol. You show me the path of life. In your presence there is fullness of joy.*

Galatians: *Brothers and sisters, for freedom Christ has set us free. Do not submit again to a yoke of slavery. Do not use your freedom for self indulgence, but through love become slaves to one another. The whole law is summed up in a single commandment,, "You shall love your neighbour as yourself. If you bite and devour one another, take care that you are not consumed by one another. Live by the Spirit. Do not gratify the desires of the flesh, for these are opposed to each other, to prevent you from doing what you want.*

Luke: *Jesus sent messengers ahead . The entered a village of the Samaritans to make ready for Jesus, but the Samaritans did not receive him, because his face was set toward Jerusalem. James and John said, "Lord do you want us to command fire to come down from heaven and consume them?" But Jesus turned and rebuked them. Along the road, someone said, "I will follow wherever you go." Jesus said, "Foxes have holes and birds have nests but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head." To another Jesus said, "Follow me." But he replied, "Lord let me go and bury my father. Jesus said, "Let the dead bury their own dead but as for you, go and proclaim the kingdom of God." Another said, I will follow you, but let me first say farewell to my family. Jesus said to him, "No one who puts a hand to the plough and looks back is fit for the kingdom of God."*