

SEPTEMBER 30, 2020
Memorial of St. Jerome, Priest & Doctor of the Church
Luke 9: 57-62

“TOTAL DEDICATION IN FOLLOWING JESUS”

We hear in our gospel today three would-be disciples and followers of the Lord. But before they say yes to His call to follow Him, they have their own ‘excuses’ which can be our own excuses too.

“The first says very generously that he will go wherever Jesus is going. Jesus answers: ‘Foxes have their lairs and the birds of the air their nests, but the Son of Man has no place to lay his head.’ These words of Jesus indicate not poverty or indigence but freedom.”¹ For the second man to bury first his father, Jesus told him to answer and act now not tomorrow. “This does not mean that his father had just died, and he wanted to attend the funeral. To follow Jesus fully one needs to be free, not to be tied down by anything and not to be anxious about having or not having things. It is more likely that he wanted, as a dutiful son, to wait for his father’s death before going off with Jesus. But that is not good enough. The call of Jesus transcends needs of family, tradition, and culture. The needs of the living outweigh those of the dead. His father might not die for years; what was the man supposed to do in the meantime? Once we are aware of Jesus’ call the only time to answer is now.”² While the third would-be follower, Jesus answered him that every decision to follow Him entails no turning back or reversing our desire to serve God and our neighbors. To follow Him is not a part-time affair, to follow Him is all or nothing.

Let us look at the life of St. Jerome, Priest and Doctor of the Church, the memorial we are celebrating today. He is the instrumental in the Latin text of the Bible. When St. Jerome decided to follow the Lord with his whole heart and mind, he was inspired by the

¹ www.catholicsermons.com/weekday/living_space

² *ibid*

Spirit for us to understand the Scripture through his writings and commentary. "Born to a rich pagan family, Jerome squandered his youth. After his conversion, he was baptized in 365 and began his study of theology. He lived for years as a hermit in the Syrian deserts. Ordained a priest, he was a student of Saint Gregory of Nazianzen, and secretary to Pope Damasus who commissioned him to revise the Latin text of the Bible, translating most of the Old Testament from the Hebrew. The result of his 30 years of work was the Vulgate translation, which was in common use until the Vatican II Council. He also wrote scriptural commentaries, which are a great source of inspiration for us today. He was an avid student, a thorough scholar, a prodigious letter-writer and a consultant to monk, bishop and pope. Saint Augustine said of him, "What Jerome is ignorant of, no mortal has ever known." He lived his last 34 years in the Holy Land as a semi-recluse."³

My brothers and sisters, when we really say Yes to the Lord everything will flow from there. The moment that you give yourself to Him, He will take care of you no matter what; just believe, trust and follow the Lord with our whole soul, heart and mind. So, let us examine, evaluate, and re-assess our own Yes to the call of Jesus: 'Come, follow me.' Are we still in the right track or are tired or like to quit already? Are we still anxious with what will happen to us in the future? Who will be our priority, to follow the Lord or our own desire and caprices? My brothers and sisters, to follow the Lord is nothing else but our total self-giving, no turning back and trusting Him that He will be with us no matter what.

³ www.catholicsermons.com/together_with_god_s_word