

13TH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

Succeeding to an office, a property, dignity, title or throne is part and parcel of our social life. Because no matter who we are a time will come that we have to retire from doing our work.

But for the continuation of our good works/our mission we appoint people or people are appointed to succeed us.

Today's first reading speaks about the continuation of the prophetic mission of Elijah.

God calls Elijah to appoint Elisha, the farmer, as his successor.

When Elijah approaches Elisha to take his prophetic office Elisha's initial reaction is that he should be allowed to perform his social obligation first. He said, **"Please, let me kiss my father and mother goodbye and I will come and follow you."**

Elisha is not denied this courtesy. The point here is that Elisha does not allow his social obligation and profession to prevent him from following Elijah and taking over from him. He abandons all to follow him.

The second half of the Gospel speaks about difficult challenges that three potential followers of Jesus face.

The first person volunteers to follow Jesus wherever he goes. Jesus tells him that if he becomes his disciple, he must be ready to move at every call. His life must be a life of total dedication.

Jesus invites the second person to follow him. But he tells Jesus that he is ready but what is holding him back is his filial obligation of burying his father.

Jesus' response to him to let the dead bury their dead, I will say, does not forbid the young man to carry out for his father what his duty as a son imposes on him. Jesus emphasizes that nothing is more important than responding to the gospel. And no matter what a disciple should continue his spiritual duties.

The third person like the first person also volunteers to follow Jesus but he should be allowed to perform his social obligation of saying farewell to his family at home. He is half-hearted. He will follow when certain conditions are fulfilled. But Jesus tells him to concentrate all his abilities on what lies ahead.

What Jesus highlights in his responses to the three potential followers is the foundational requirement for following him. Commitment to Jesus must be total.

To continue the mission of Jesus in the world today the Church appoints some of her members to be ministers in the Church. For the appointed ministers to make the Christian community welcoming and enables all to reflect Jesus in their lives at home and in the broader community they need volunteer ministers to help them.

The point is we need the appointed ministers and the volunteer ministers as we continue to move forward on our journey of faith. We need them to help our churches and parishes to thrive in all areas of life—in word, worship, community and service.

The Church appreciates all that you do for the growth of the parish.

I know sometimes social obligations and other commitments tend to hold us back but as Jesus, in today's gospel, asks for total dedication on the part of his followers to his service so no matter what we must continue to devote our time and talents to the service of God and the Church.

To be dedicated we should see the importance of prayer and spiritual formation to what we do.

Brothers and sisters let us all discern what God calls us to be and to do. God needs all of us today for his work.