

Homily for Sunday Mass
June 30, 2019
Year C – Luke 9:51-62
----Father Michael Grant George Cadotte----

I wonder if the Spanish commander Cortes was reading I Kings during his conquest of Mexico in 1519. For, upon reaching the Mexican shores he scuttled his ships to ensure that his men would fight and conquer for if they didn't their ride home was gone, and they would surely perish. Now this comparison is a bit harsh, and rather brutal on all sides of the equation, compared to our first reading and Elijah's call to Elisha (ee-Li-shuh) but that is basically what Elisha does. He slaughters his source of security and income and burns the tools that sustain him. This was an all in demonstration of his faith and commitment to his calling. He also shows great compassion and love to his fellow human by feeding his people – a precursor if you will to Jesus' continued call to love our neighbor that Paul also echoed in his writings including to Galatia in our second reading.

Our first two readings set a tone for our Gospel reading today – no real surprise there I suspect, but it is easy to miss it. Luke's account of Jesus beginning his journey to Jerusalem and coming across three persons wanting to follow him, touches on two major themes of the teachings of Jesus Christ. First, is the theme of compassion and love. God is love and Jesus is God, therefore we should never be surprised that a central teaching theme of Jesus is to love – not only God but each other. When Jesus is rejected by a Samaritan village, yes, the same Samaritans that our Jewish friends of that time loved to hate, Jesus rebukes James and John for their wanting to lash out and punish what they see as an evil and heretical people. Through his example and teaching Jesus shows no anger or hatred to what society says is his enemy and he takes no action against a direct slight. When was the last time someone clearly hurt you, disrespected you, or embarrassed you and you walked away with no anger in your heart? This is what Jesus is teaching his disciples, teaching US, to do. Follow him not only as faithful believers

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but follow him in our actions, in our love for all. Carol and Denis Keller sum it up saying, “The freedom Jesus brought us is the freedom from the way of the world, from the way of the flesh. Those who live by the Spirit realize that the flesh – the way of the world – is in conflict with the way of the Christ. Those who cannot discover how to love their neighbor live as though they were biting and devouring others. That is the way of the flesh that seeks only its own benefit. When one loves others, the law is not relevant. The law of the Spirit, the way of the Christ is the way of loving one another. That is our calling” (Volume, Keller).

And that calling leads us to the other theme of Jesus in today’s Gospel reading, the theme of following Jesus’ call to discipleship whole heartedly and without waver. Our first reading about Elisha’s response to Elijah’s call prepares us for this. I always read Jesus’ response to these potential followers as a bit over the top and harsh. I found them confusing against the backdrop of the Christ I thought I knew. The reality is I simply did not look deep enough into what was happening here – another teachable moment brought to you by our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. All three of our friends that wanted to follow Jesus wanted to tie up their personal lives first and make sure they were secure in life before joining Christ. Some even suggest the young man’s father was not dead but he wanted to ‘wait’ till he was to make sure he secured his inheritance before running off with Jesus. There is then, our teachable moment. Jesus is telling us our faith must transcend our earthly world and the desires it presents to us. Jesus is telling us that our future and our salvation lies with him and if we are to be fully successful, we need to be fully in and not looking backward in life. It’s full speed ahead in our faith my friends. “Jesus is not an add-on to a busy life just when there is extra time, for instance. Instead, keeping Jesus in mind

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helps us manage a busy life by connecting each of our activities to his word and promise”

(Volume, LaBlanc).

And our daily life & world, what Paul called the flesh, will always present us with the convenient, the easy, the ‘just enough’ but just like with emails and offers that promise the amazing and impossible we know they are nearly always a scam. So, conjuring up my best SNL Church Lady I can, I dare ask, who could possibly present decisions, options, and actions in our daily life that is ‘just enough’ and rather easy? Who could it possibly be that would give us the excuse not to follow Jesus on the difficult path each and every time? Who is it? Could it be...SATAN? You better believe it my friends.

Jesus does not offer the easy and the simple, but he offers the unending love of God and salvation for our souls. We must take care always to keep focused on this outside of Mass in our daily lives. That now tired questions from bracelets and bumper stickers holds true, “What would Jesus do?” So my final question to you then is, “if you answer the question ‘what would Jesus do’ are you doing it?”

AMEN

---Citations---

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