

Homily - Year 13 C - June 30, 2019

God is bigger than Elvis. Hopefully, you all know who God is. Probably most of you know who Elvis is. But, I bet there are not too many of us left who remember Dolores Hart. She was an actress who was the first to kiss Elvis on the silver screen. She left a famous acting career at age 24 to become a cloistered, contemplative Benedictine nun. HBO did a documentary on her entitled "God is bigger than Elvis." Those were her words, God is the bigger Elvis. Her way of committing to God was the convent. No matter how we commit ourselves to God, we must still see God as the bigger Elvis. If you google the title, you will find a site where you can watch this 40 minute documentary

Of course, she is only one of the many, including many of us, who have recognized how important God is and how big God is. Look carefully at the response given by Elisha. When Elijah invited him to follow, Elijah told him that it had to be a full-hearted response without exception. Then, when we turn to the gospel, we hear excuse after excuse of why people couldn't follow Jesus right away. Our first reaction might be that Jesus was harsh. What was wrong with saying good-bye to the relatives before going on a journey of following Jesus? The point to be made is not so much in the saying good-bye, but rather, God is asking for a 100% commitment to being his disciple.

That 100% commitment is still asked of us today. Of course, there are many things that we have to do in life, but those things should never, and I mean never, prevent us from being a 100% disciple of Jesus. It is somewhat like being married. If you are married, you are always married and that marriage commitment doesn't change just because of a job or a sickness or other responsibilities in life.

Think of it this way. If you met a medical or engineering or law or accounting student, and the student said: "I want to be an average doctor or I want to be a pretty good engineer who gets things right most of the time or I would be a happy attorney if I won 60% of my cases or I would be satisfied if only 20% of my clients get IRS audits. Well, I am not sure about you, but I would not want those students as my doctor or design engineer or defense attorney or tax accountant.

So too it is with being a disciple of Jesus. We cannot be wishy-washy in our discipleship. When Lucy told Charlie Brown that he would always be wishy-washy, Charlie came up with a solution. He would be wishy one day

and washy the next day. Jesus asks 100% commitment from us no matter what our life situations may be. Whether we are married, mother, father, son, daughter, single, working, unemployed, student, child at home, we can always be a Catholic. No matter our profession: teacher, home parent, mechanic, administrator, secretary, clerk, or chief executive office, we can always be a Catholic.

You can never take a day off from being a citizen, from being a parent, from being a member of a family, from being a professional, or from being a student of life. So too, a devoted Catholic can never take a day off from being a Catholic, a devoted follower of Jesus.

In a family if parents were on-again off-again, the family would fall apart. If a corporation's CEO spent most of his time unengaged in the operations of the business, the company would take a nose dive. If a doctor treated his patients superficially, their health would suffer. So too, if we are not serious about our Catholic faith, our Catholic heritage, indeed our Catholic patrimony, then those small chinks in the fabric of commitment will give way to become major rips and major disasters.

It is said that the strength of any organization or organism is found in its weakest member. That germ of truth is very true, but very annoying.

I know that some of you in church today may be annoyed or maybe another adjective not to be used in church, because you no longer have your church. I understand fully. However, our Catholic faith is rooted in a person, Jesus Christ, and his presence here on earth, the church. Our faith is not rooted in a building even if we are more comfortable in one building or another. The church building is where we have been able to live out a portion of our Catholic commitment. For that reason we are attached to one building or another. However, the basis for our faith remains Jesus and his Church with a capital C.

Some have said that they want to write to the bishop and complain. I suggest that you write and speak with your relatives and friends and express your frustration with them for not participating in church and the life of the parish. After all, if they were in church and supporting the church, the buildings would still be open.

We pray today that we can abolish excuses of non-practice from our lives, lead others to find truth in our Catholic faith, and always be faithful disciples of Jesus in his church. After all, as Dolores Hart discovered, God is much bigger than any Elvis in our lives.