

# Homily for the 13<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time

June 29-30, 2019

Readings: 1 Kings 19: 16B, 19-21; Galatians 5: 1, 13-18; Luke 9: 51-62

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I don't know about you, but sometimes I get overwhelmed. Preparing today's readings, I was *overwhelmed*.

- Overwhelmed by the freedom we will celebrate on the 4<sup>th</sup> of July: Freedom we have as citizens won by the efforts of people over 200 years ago.
- Overwhelmed at how we use or sometimes misuse our freedom: Taking it for granted, building up, or destroying our or others' freedom.

And we have freedom, too, as Christians and children of God, won by Jesus 2,000 years ago. We can be overwhelmed at how we use the freedom of faith to build up each other and the Kin-dom—or sometimes not.

Today's readings speak to this:

- Elijah calls Elisha; and Elisha follows.
- Jesus calls disciples and they respond.

But... there are some strong buts; and Jesus tells it to them straight: One says, "I will follow you *anywhere*," yet Jesus cautions: "I have nowhere to lay my head..." Nowhere to feel completely comfortable.

*Comfortable*....hmmm...It is said that the role of a Christian is to "comfort the disturbed, and to disturb the comfortable."

So where are you and I called to be disciples where we're *not* comfortable?

- Everything's not going exactly as I want (health, family, career, community, etc.), or
- When we stay up all night with a sad or sick family member, worried or dying friend, or

- When we don't want to get up in front of people or speak out in situations for the poor or against guns or violence or oppression (locally or globally)—it's not popular, it's risky...

Yet Jesus had nowhere to lay his head; he wasn't always comfortable preaching or ending up on the cross.

Another potential disciple in the Gospel says, "I'll follow you, but let me bury the dead *first*." Ah...there will always be excuses—even important reasons to put off being a disciple (living our faith):

- I'm too young (Zachariah tried that!), too old (Abraham and Sarah found that didn't work), someone else could do it better (God wasn't interested in Moses' hesitations either).
- I would, but this church is so far from perfect; I don't like how they did something; it wouldn't make any difference.
- I'm too tired, too busy to get involved; I have other commitments, etc.

Those things are real; it's just that God may have different priorities and promises that all will eventually fall in line.

Jesus says that one who "puts their hand to the plow but keeps looking back" isn't going to make it either. When we keep looking back, it either causes us to worry and get stymied *or* we want to see immediate results. I'm good at that:

- I want everything to be clear and perfect, with church leadership and everything else.
- Parents want to see good results for their children or grandchildren *now*.
- We write one letter or go to one meeting or say a few prayers, and we want the issue taken care of *now*.

But things take time. Depending on immediate results, or wasting time looking back or complaining is not helpful in being a committed believer. We simply need to keep plugging and doing what we can—the best we can. Being a disciple is not comfortable; there are no immediate results or sure-fire ways of making a difference or building the Kin-dom.

Yet we are *free*...

- To follow Jesus' ways of love and dedication to the good
- To reach out our hands across the aisles (all kinds!?) or across our country
- To love and act accordingly, not because we have to, but because we want to

Overwhelming? Yes. But we can do it together. And we can encourage each other not to lose heart. There's a vision here of being a disciple, a community of faith, as citizens of one nation under God with justice and liberty and freedom for all. We can make a difference together!