

Is the Lord Our Lord?
June 26, 2022 – Thirteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time
Gospel of Luke 9:51-62
Fr. Brad

In sports, we hear how athletes '*put their game face on*' on game day, meaning they must be focused and ready for the gridlock to come.

Jesus' face is set on Jerusalem which will be the site of the culmination and end of his earthly ministry. He knows what is to come and his mindset is ever more focused on the accomplishment of His mission.

So we can understand the intensity of Jesus' mood at this time.

“No one who puts a hand to the plough and looks back is fit for the kingdom of God.”

Soren Kierkegaard once said that what Jesus wants is followers not admirers.

So what does it mean to follow Jesus?

Imitation yes, but not just by doing what he did which is a part of it, but by looking to be motivated by the same Spirit that motivated Him. Do we actually desire what He desired in his earthly lifetime and what he desires for us now through the Spirit?

That is unity of heart, drawing all things into one. For that we must look to a deeper place within ourselves than our political and social views on how society should be run. It entails, wanting the best not only for ourselves but the best for those around us. That's why jealousy, envy, unhealthy competition, insisting on our own way (as St. Paul says) are sins against our mission to love. They are hurdles to overcome if we are to live in the same Spirit.

Lets look at a few of the implications of living in that same Spirit as exemplified in our readings.

Forgive and move on

Leave them alone and get on with the mission.

Jesus rebukes the disciples for suggesting they send fire down on the Samaritans for not receiving them. Jesus knows where the Samaritans are coming from, he understands, forgives and moves on. They may not appear to be siding with Jesus, but sorting out their resentments and lack of hospitality was not Jesus' primary mission. *Leave them alone, they'll have to figure it out, I have a mission that is infinitely more important.* Can we say that we are doing that?

Love the counter arguers even if they are, in your view, misinformed. Don't linger or cling to vengeful thoughts or spending too much time trying to convince someone of

your own viewpoint. Rest assured there is something lacking on both sides of a disagreement. So curb the impulsive responses. Get on with your mission to love.

In our human frailty and limitedness, and vulnerability, every single one of us are limited in our perceptions, we are all misinformed at some level, so to be contentious over issues where there are no easy answers can bring a frivolous sidetrack to the real mission at hand, and waste everybody's time.

Note how quickly human beings can be sucked into turning on each other over abortion pro life issues, vaccine issues, gun control issues, gender issues. There is always 'outrage' on both sides of the issue that too often spill over into violence. Jesus challenges us not to buy into the divisiveness.

The Cost of Discipleship. The demands of discipleship. Elijah basically says to Elisha, 'Come now, and don't look back. Are you in or you are out?'

Is Jesus being too harsh in the Gospel? It is not meant to be cold and unreasonable - - Jesus is not rejecting the notion of the son's cultural responsibility to tending to his father's funeral and burial. It is more a statement about the urgency of the mission.

How often do we get side tracked from something or someone we have agreed to take responsibility for? How many things in our lives are a work in progress, long neglected, that we have yet to get back to? Some of those things we will never finish. But to tend to our relationship with God and our call is the first priority. It's why we are here in the first place. The primary reason for our existence and our deeds is to participate in the mission Jesus so urgently invites us to participate.

Jesus' commentary in the Gospel is a statement about the seriousness of the call and of the response. Neither the call nor the response is to be taken lightly. It is the call of a lifetime.

Similarly, Elisha's request to go back to say goodbye to his parents seems like the loving thing to do but Elijah's response is dismissive. Both Elijah and Jesus are emphasizing the comparative importance of the mission over the niceties of being polite and courteous and thus worldly preoccupied.

Our Lord is reminding us that Christianity (and Catholicism) are challenges not just warm blankets. Tending to our families, being courteous in our relationships are good things but they receive their worth from God-love.

Jesus loves us in the most profound way possible but he was no people pleaser. Our following Jesus entails focus and commitment to a deeper way of living, one that inspires a faithfulness to the divine Will of the Father, the food that sustained Jesus throughout his earthly mission. May we grow in our commitment to follow Him and embrace the divine love that motivates. Amen