

THIRTEENTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

Year C

1 Kings 19:16b, 19-21
Psalm 16:1-2, 5, 7-8, 9-10, 11
Galatians 5:1, 13-18
Luke 9:51-62

Gathering

(An unlit candle, a crucifix and a Bible open to this week's gospel are arranged on a table in the gathering place.)

Prayer

(The candle is lit. The leader invites the community to attune themselves to God in their midst. After a time of quiet, members pray as follows.)

Leader: Keep me, O God, for in you I take refuge;
I say to the LORD, "My Lord are you.
O Lord, my allotted portion and my cup,
you it is who hold fast my lot."

All: You are my inheritance, O Lord.

Leader: I bless the LORD who counsels me;
even in the night my heart exhorts me.
I set the LORD ever before me;
with him at my right hand I shall not be disturbed.

All: You are my inheritance, O Lord.

Leader: Therefore my heart is glad and my soul rejoices,
my body, too, abides in confidence
because you will not abandon my soul to the netherworld,
nor will you suffer your faithful one to undergo corruption.

All: You are my inheritance, O Lord.

Leader: You will show me the path to life,



fullness of joys in your presence,
the delights at your right hand forever.

All: You are my inheritance, O Lord.

HEARING THE LORD'S GOSPEL

(The scriptures are proclaimed aloud with a pause after each reading. Following a pause after the proclamation of the gospel, the leader invites members to name a word or phrase from the gospel that stays with them, but without any additional comment. Some may repeat what another has already said.)

When this naming is complete, the leader passes out copies of the scriptures of the week as needed. Pausing between them, the leader then poses these two questions: "What draws you to this gospel?" "Where do you resist this gospel?" The community pauses for a time of silent reflection. After about a minute, the leader invites members to consider the Reflection and Questions for the week. After a time for silent reflection, the leader invites members to re-arrange themselves in groups of three or four for sharing. The small groups move off so as not to intrude on one another.)

Reflection

This week's gospel features Jesus' exchanges with three potential disciples. The first approaches Jesus saying, "I will follow you wherever you go." But does he know the consequences? Jesus' response makes it clear that discipleship is not something that we can just jump into. To make the move from admiration to discipleship, we must think it through, pray it through and be prepared for what may come.

The second prospect is one who Jesus approaches: "Follow me," says Jesus. The man hesitates: "Let me bury my father first." To a Jew of Jesus' time his response would sound scandalous. The responsibility for the burial of one's parents was supreme. Jesus says, in effect, that there are no legitimate excuses for us not to respond to our call to discipleship. God's claim on us is ultimate. Yes, we have jobs or go to school or have responsibilities to our families. But we can do all of those things as disciples. Discipleship calls us to make Jesus primary. This will shape everything else in our lives.

The third potential disciple says, "I will follow you, Lord..." But he too attaches a pre-condition, saying farewell to his family. It sounds natural

enough. But Jesus responds, "Whoever puts his hand to the plow but keeps looking back is unfit for the reign of God."

Luke is not trying to portray Jesus as disrespectful of our natural ties. He is highlighting our ultimate ties and the import of the consequences of discipleship for us all.

Anyone who has tried to paint a line or chalk a baseball foul line knows that if you are not looking ahead, you aren't doing the job. Good people can take off to follow Christ, but then instead of reflecting on their experiences with the world in the bright light of Christ, they often get distracted and reflect on their experiences with Christ more in the dim light of the world.

When the good news of Jesus Christ doesn't make sense in our world, it is our world that must be challenged to change. Whether it be issues like climate change, homelessness, abortion, domestic violence, gun safety, sexual promiscuity, the death penalty, healthcare, drugs, nuclear weapons or assisted suicide, when the ways of the world run afoul of gospel values, the consequences attached to authentic discipleship call us not to change the gospel, but the world.

Questions for Reflection and Conversation

- ◆ Reflect on a decision you know you have made in light of your discipleship.
- ◆ How scandalized are you by the demands of discipleship?
- ◆ What does discipleship ask of you these days?

HEARING THE GOSPEL'S LORD

(After about fifteen minutes of sharing in threes/fours, the leader re-gathers the community. Once back together, members pause for a moment. The leader then poses these questions: "What do you want to hold on to for yourself from this session?" "How are you/we being called to live in response to God's word?" After a pause, the leader invites the community to a time of conversation. When this sharing is complete, the community moves to a time of prayer.)

Response in Action Suggestions

- ◆ Seek out a social service non-profit organization that serves your ~

area's neediest residents in the areas of food, housing, and economic security. Seek out a volunteer opportunity with one of their programs which provides support services for those living with HIV/AIDS.

- ◆ It is said that 60% of the people in nursing homes, have no visitors. Lower that percentage by visiting a nursing home and be the presence of Christ to somebody there.
- ◆ Lent might seem like the more *usual* time to walk the Stations of the Cross, but do it this week. At each station, reflect on what the disciples were doing at that moment and on what they could have been doing.

Prayer

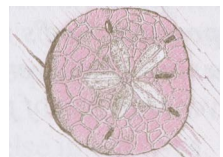
(After a brief pause, the gospel or a portion of it, either of the other readings as appropriate or the responsorial psalm are proclaimed. The idea is to select a text that lends itself to inviting members to the time of silent prayer that follows. Following the proclamation, the leader poses these questions to the members: “What does Christ in his Spirit say to you now?” “What do you say to him in response?” The community pauses for a full five minutes of prayerful attention to God. A brief instrumental selection may be played during part of this time. After this time of silence, the leader invites members simply to mention a word or two, or a brief expression that captures what they hear Christ saying to them personally. The community receives this without additional comment.

Following this sharing, a member prays the following on behalf of all.)

Member: Our good and loving God, you call to us in every moment of our lives. Open our ears to hear your call. Open our eyes to see you in those around us. Open our minds to understand the meaninglessness of our lives without you. Open our hearts to take in your love and send it out again to others. In Jesus name, we pray.

All: Amen.

(Members join in singing some familiar hymn.)



The session concludes with the exchange of a sign of peace.)