

Sunday: 27 June 2010
13th Sunday of Ordinary Time

Reading 1: 1 Kings 19:16b, 19-21

Psalm 16: 1-2, 5, 7-8, 9-10,11

Reading 2: Galatians 5:1, 13-18

Gospel Reading: Luke 9:51-62

Scripture: *Luke 9:51-62*

51 When the days drew near for him to be received up, he set his face to go to Jerusalem. 52 And he sent messengers ahead of him, who went and entered a village of the Samaritans, to make ready for him; 53 but the people would not receive him, because his face was set toward Jerusalem. 54 And when his disciples James and John saw it, they said, "Lord, do you want us to bid fire come down from heaven and consume them?" 55 But he turned and rebuked them. 56 And they went on to another village. 57 As they were going along the road, a man said to him, "I will follow you wherever you go." 58 And Jesus said to him, "Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man has nowhere to lay his head." 59 To another he said, "Follow me." But he said, "Lord, let me first go and bury my father." 60 But he said to him, "Leave the dead to bury their own dead; but as for you, go and proclaim the kingdom of God." 61 Another said, "I will follow you, Lord; but let me first say farewell to those at my home." 62 Jesus said to him, "No one who puts his hand to the plow and looks back is fit for the kingdom of God."

Meditation: Are you surprised to see two of Jesus' disciples praying for the destruction of a Samaritan village? The Jews and Samaritans had been divided for centuries. Jewish pilgrims who passed through Samaritan territory were often assaulted. Jesus did the unthinkable for a Jew. He not only decided to travel through Samaritan territory at personal risk, but he also asked for hospitality in one of their villages! Jesus' offer of friendship was rebuffed. Is there any wonder that the disciples were indignant and felt justified in wanting to see retribution done to this village? Wouldn't you respond the same way? Jesus, however, rebukes his disciples for their lack of toleration. Jesus had "*set his face toward Jerusalem*" to die on a cross that Jew, Samaritan and Gentile might be reconciled with God and be united as one people in Christ.

Tolerance is a much needed virtue today. But aren't we often tolerant for the wrong thing or for the wrong motive? Christian love seeks the highest good of both one's neighbor and one's enemy. When Abraham Lincoln was criticized for his courtesy and tolerance towards his enemies during the American Civil War, he responded: "Do I not destroy my enemies when I make them my friends?" How do you treat those who cross you and cause you trouble? Do you seek their good rather than their harm?

When the Lord calls us to follow him he gives us the grace to put aside everything that might keep us from doing his will. Loyalty to Jesus requires sacrifice, letting go of my will for God's will. A would-be disciple responded by saying, *I must first go and bury my father*, that is, go back home and take care of him until he died. Jesus certainly did not mean that we should refuse to care for others, especially our parents in their old age. His startling statement, however, made clear that God must always be first in our lives. If we love him above all, then everything else will fall into its proper place and time.

Jesus surprised his disciples by telling that they must not look back but keep their focus on the goal set for their lives – full happiness and union with God. A plowman who looked back caused his furrow to be crooked. Likewise, if we keep looking back to what we left behind, our path in following God will likely go off course and we'll miss what God has for us. When the going is rough or the way ahead looks uncertain, we are tempted to look back to the "good old days" or to look for "greener turf". Are you resolved to keep your eyes fixed on Jesus and to "stay the course" in following him to the end?

Questions for Community Faith Sharing:

1. How can we make following God the first priority in life, when we have so many other things to do daily?
2. What are the things you may have to sacrifice in life in order to follow Jesus?
3. Can you find a way to commit yourself fully to Jesus, without compromising on your responsibilities to you family, your society and your country?

"Take, O Lord, and receive my entire liberty, my memory, my understanding, and my whole will. All that I am and all that I possess you have given me. I surrender it all to you to be disposed of according to your will. Give me only your love and your grace – with these I will be rich enough and will desire nothing more."