

Alleluia, alleluia!

Speak, O Lord, your servant is listening;
you have the words of everlasting life.

Alleluia!

GOSPEL

Lk 9:51-62

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Luke.

*Jesus resolutely set his face towards Jerusalem.
I will follow you wherever you will go.*

As the time drew near for him to be taken up to heaven, Jesus resolutely took the road for Jerusalem and sent messengers ahead of him. These set out, and they went into a Samaritan village to make preparations for him, but the people would not receive him because he was making for Jerusalem. Seeing this, the disciples James and John said, 'Lord, do you want us to call down fire from heaven to burn them up?' But he turned and rebuked them, and they went off to another village.

As they travelled along they met a man on the road who said to him, 'I will follow you wherever you go.' Jesus answered, 'Foxes have holes and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head.' Another to whom he said, 'Follow me,' replied, 'Let me go and bury my father first.' But he answered, 'Leave the dead to bury their dead; your duty is to go and spread the news of the kingdom of God.'

Another said, 'I will follow you, sir, but first let me go and say good-bye to my people at home.' Jesus said to him, 'Once the hand is laid on the plough, no one who looks back is fit for the kingdom of God.'

■ The Gospel of the Lord.

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Breaking Open the Word



THE SAVING WORD

THIRTEENTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME / C

26 JUNE 2022

THE CALL TO FOLLOW

When Paul wrote to the Christians of Galatia it was to his own converts, people he had evangelised and continued to guide in their journey of faith. As Gentile converts Paul had not required them to follow all the demands of the Jewish Law. Later, Jewish Christians arrived arguing that Paul was mistaken and this led to confusion and conflict among them.

Paul's response is to remind the Galatians that they are called to freedom and that Gentile Christians had no need to follow all the requirements of the Jewish Law in order to be Christians. However, the freedom to which Christians are called cannot be confused with self-indulgence since Christians are all called to be faithful to the demands of the higher law of love.

The beginning of Jesus' journey to Jerusalem is the appropriate time to clarify the nature of discipleship and its demands. The disciples must learn that Jesus' road is one of peace and that they should move on quietly when they meet opposition. To the man that says he will follow him Jesus reminds him of the lack of security that lies ahead of disciples. To those who ask leave to bury their dead and say farewell to their parents, Jesus replies that even the demands of family relationships and responsibilities take second place to the call to follow him as disciples.

Christopher Monaghan CP

FIRST READING

1 Kings 19:16, 19-21

A reading from the first book of the Kings

Elisha rose and followed Elijah and became his servant.

The Lord said to Elijah: 'Go, you are to anoint Elisha son of Shaphat, of Abel Meholah, as prophet to succeed you.' Leaving there, Elijah came on Elisha son of Shaphat as he was ploughing behind twelve yoke of oxen, he himself being with the twelfth. Elijah passed near to him and threw his cloak over him. Elisha left his oxen and ran after Elijah. 'Let me kiss my father and mother, then I will follow you' he said. Elijah answered, 'Go, go back; for have I done anything to you?' Elisha turned away, took the pair of oxen and slaughtered them. He used the plough for cooking the oxen, then gave to his men, who ate. He then rose, and followed Elijah and became his servant.

■ The word of the Lord.

RESP PSALM

Ps 15:1-2, 5, 7-11. R. cf. v. 5

R. You are my inheritance, O Lord.

1. Preserve me, God, I take refuge in you. / I say to the Lord: 'You are my God.' / O Lord, it is you who are my portion and cup; / it is you yourself who are my prize. **R.**
2. I will bless the Lord who gives me counsel, / who even at night directs my heart. / I keep the Lord ever in my sight: / since he is at my right hand, I shall stand firm. **R.**
3. And so my heart rejoices, my soul is glad; / even my body shall rest in safety. / For you will not leave my soul among the dead, / nor let your beloved know decay. **R.**
4. You will show me the path of life, / the fullness of joy in your presence, / at your right hand happiness for ever. **R.**



SECOND READING

Gal 5:1, 13-18

A reading from the letter of St Paul to the Galatians

My brothers, you were called to freedom.

When Christ freed us, he meant us to remain free. Stand firm, therefore, and do not submit again to the yoke of slavery.

My brothers, you were called, as you know, to liberty; but be careful, or this liberty will provide an opening for self-indulgence. Serve one another, rather, in works of love, since the whole of the Law is summarised in a single command: Love your neighbour as yourself. If you go snapping at each other and tearing each other to pieces, you had better watch or you will destroy the whole community.

Let me put it like this: if you are guided by the Spirit you will be in no danger of yielding to self-indulgence, since self-indulgence is the opposite of the Spirit, the Spirit is totally against such a thing, and it is precisely because the two are so opposed that you do not always carry out your good intentions. If you are led by the Spirit, no law can touch you.

■ The word of the Lord.