

Our Lady of Lourdes

13th Sunday of Ordinary Time

June 27, 2010

Readings:

1st Kings 19:16, 19-21

Galatians 5:1, 13-18

Luke 9:51-62

Fr. Bob

Our gospel reading today is one that takes a little work to really understand what is happening. There are two distinct scenes in this one passage. The first is the inhospitality of the Samaritans who wanted nothing to do with Christ since he was going to Jerusalem. The second, has to do with those who said they wanted to follow Christ and he seemed to put up too many barriers, and asked too much of the people. The first scene is easier to understand.

There is a difference between human understanding and the divine on many occasions as we go through life. For the apostles, when Jesus was rejected, they responded with anger when the suggestion was made to pray for fire to rain down on the people. But the scene harkens back to the threat God made in the Hebrew scriptures to destroy an entire city. It's actually a story about the mercy of God. He finally relents, saying if just a few just people could be found in the midst of all the sin then he would not destroy the city. For Jesus, it must have been the same. In that Samaritan town, there must have been some just and righteous people like the example of the Good Samaritan. Jesus showed his compassion immediately. Even if they didn't recognize him or welcome him, they were still part of God's creation. In the second scene, when someone asks to follow him, he says that the son of man has nowhere to rest his head. Jesus was not going to be confined to one place or one temple and to follow him meant having that same understanding. As he belongs to the whole world, so do we.

Wherever we are at any given moment, we are disciples of Christ. We can't isolate him or corral him into a very small world. When Jesus told the man who wanted to bury his father, first Jesus rebuked him. But when a father dies, the son takes over all his responsibilities to the family and to the work. He was saying that he would follow Jesus if he didn't have to get rid of his wealth and if he could qualify his discipleship. Another wanted to say farewell to his family. And Jesus' seemingly harsh reply was meant to challenge his commitment. He wanted to know how far the man would go to follow him, or would something always be dragging him back. Jesus had nothing against families. Instead he was challenging the commitment to follow him. And in those challenges are the lessons for us today.

From the first scene, how often do we look at the world in a different way than God? How often do we look at God's people throughout the world and instead of praying for peace, we pray for destruction or pray only for our own? From the second scene, do we see ourselves as pilgrims travelling through life and seeing and feeling God's presence in every moment and place? Is the accumulation of wealth, an obsession that preoccupies? What are the things that hold us back from being the disciples we are called to be by our Baptism? What are the things that we need to hold onto in order to follow Christ? And just as important, what are the things we have to let go of?

From our gospel today we have many challenges; to be merciful as our God is merciful, to be part of the entire world, and finally, to find the way to be true disciples of Christ. To find the way, to fulfill our baptismal promises, and to take part in those things that are divine, and to take part in something that lasts forever. But it will not happen without determination, or sacrifice.