

13th Sunday of Ordinary Time, Year C

GOSPEL

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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 goodbye 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.'

(Luke 9:51-62)

DID YOU KNOW?

Points of interest and Catholic lore

- A very central theme in Luke's writings is that of journey. In Luke's Gospel, Jesus' journey to Jerusalem is the vehicle for his preaching and for the formation of the disciples in what it means to be a follower of Christ.
- Luke's second volume is the Acts of the Apostles. In this book, the journey continues with the message of Jesus being taken by the Church outward from Jerusalem to the ends of the earth.
- There existed an ancient rivalry between the Samaritans and the Jews, which caused each group to be suspicious of the other. The area of Samaria lay between Galilee in the north and Judea in the south.

EXPLORING THE WORD

This gospel text marks a turning point in Luke's story of Jesus. He has made a momentous decision. When he is rejected by the very first village he approaches, the disciples want to punish them. But Jesus refuses violence and coercion as a means of conversion. He wants willing disciples! The following three brief exchanges outline what is needed for discipleship: it won't necessarily be comfortable; there is a sense of urgency, and it requires single-mindedness and sometimes difficult choices. Comfort or family relationships cannot take priority over the kingdom of God, and once one becomes a follower of Christ, there can be no turning back. This gospel is not only about Jesus; it is about all those who seek to follow the road God has laid out for them.

- One of the characters in this text says, 'I will follow you wherever you go.' What made you embark on this journey? Has the road been difficult?
- What are the things you have had to turn your back on to continue on this journey? Are there still hurdles to overcome?

MAKING CONNECTIONS

Opportunities for group discussion and personal prayer

- You too have resolutely set out on a journey. How are you feeling about where this road is leading you?
- What difficulties have you experienced on the road to Christ?
- What have you had to leave behind?
- Reflect on times when you have had to make difficult decisions and choices—perhaps to turn your back on something you value in order to pursue an even greater goal. How did you feel? What motivated your actions? Share your reflections.
- 'Your duty is to spread the news of the kingdom of God.' Reflect on the ways available for you to spread the news of the kingdom of God. Make an extra effort to do just that this week.
- Use this adaptation of this week's collect as your prayer:

O God, you chose us to be children of light. Grant that we may not be wrapped in the error of darkness but always stand in the light of truth.

