

June 26

Thirteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time

1 Kgs 19:16b, 19-21

Gal 5:1, 13-18

Lk 9:51-62

GROW AS A DISCIPLE | PRAY, STUDY, ENGAGE, SERVE

Members of our family joke that saying goodbye after a family gathering needs to begin about an hour before we plan to leave. Goodbyes mean hugs for every family member, and there are many of us! We are aware of how precious our loved ones are to us, and so Jesus' response to the person who asks if he can first say farewell to his family may seem perplexing to us. But in this reading, Luke presents Jesus as "resolutely" headed to Jerusalem because "the days for Jesus' being taken up were fulfilled." Jesus is ready to complete the mission he came for and anyone who wants to follow him can't be distracted by indecision. His matter-of-fact answers are directed at newcomers who seem to hesitate when he invites them to follow him. He wants his disciples to know that being a disciple will have an impact on personal comfort, and that everything one does – for family, loved ones, or whomever – must flow from this discipleship *first*. It is not about ignoring other responsibilities, but carrying them out in light of who we are and whom we follow. Jesus calls us to make our relationship with him our highest priority. Doing so will bring life to all the relationships we value as we grow to live and love like him.

GO EVANGELIZE | PRAY, INVITE, WITNESS, ACCOMPANY

How do we commit to answering God's call without hesitation? Like the first Apostles, the prosperous farmer Elisha in today's first reading willingly responded to the call from Elijah. But he didn't just leave everything and go: He first burned his plow as fuel in order to cook the oxen and leave it for his people to eat. In following the Lord, his first act was to ensure that those for whom he was responsible were not left without. Answering God's call is not often easy. But like Elisha and the Apostles, we are called to listen and respond to the ways God calls us and to trust in his Spirit to guide us. As Paul tells the Galatians, we are to "live by the Spirit." By trusting in the power of the Holy Spirit and turning to him for strength and guidance, we can be Christ's presence wherever he leads us – and doing whatever it entails.

INVITE: Ask the Holy Spirit to help you discern who needs the gift of your presence in their life right now. Schedule time with this person, just listening, affirming their gifts, and assuring them of your belief in them and God's love for them.