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13th Sunday in Ordinary Time - 26 June 2022

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26 June 2022

Thirteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time

Reflection by Gerard Moore

Introduction

In the Gospel Jesus turns his face resolutely towards Jerusalem, where his fate will be at the hands of power and priesthood. It enables us to see the cost of discipleship, a theme reflected in the passing of the prophet's mantle from Elijah to Elisha.

Penitential Act

Use one of the *Roman Missal* texts or this optional litany form:

Lord Jesus, you came to show us the way.
Lord, have mercy.

You call us to follow you.
Christ, have mercy.

You bought us freedom.
Lord, have mercy.

Collect

The oration

O God, who through the grace of adoption
chose us to be children of light,
grant, we pray,
that we may not be wrapped in the darkness of error
but always be seen to stand in the bright light of truth.

Our prayer is the first of three which we encounter in Ordinary Time that have come from the worship of the Church of Milan. Some borrowing from the so named Ambrosian Rite is not too surprising, considering that the ancient liturgy had close parallels to that of Rome and was also Latin based, and more recently that Pope

Paul VI, the ultimate revisor of the Missal, had been the Archbishop of Milan prior to his election as Bishop of Rome.

The original setting of the oration are the prayers of fasting and preparation for the feast of Pentecost. In Milan, Pentecost was seen as an appropriate time for baptism, and the collect is replete with baptismal imagery.

The prayer reminds us that we respond to God within a relationship established by God. It is at divine invitation that we are adopted as children and live in the light. The vocabulary is evocative of the great acts of God: creation, the incarnation, the resurrection, the sending of the Spirit and baptism.

We live according to the divine will when we engage wholeheartedly and continuously in the truth revealed by God's light and splendour, including loving our neighbour and behaving in righteousness. The step away from God's adoption is to be enveloped by darkness, loss of direction, the abandonment of hope, sin and eternal death. This is not the will of God for the baptised. (Gerard Moore)

First Reading

1 Kings 19: 16b, 19-21

At the call of Elijah, and on the will of God, Elisha burns up his old life and follows the call to be prophet of God.

Responsorial Psalm

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

You are my inheritance, O Lord

The psalm reminds us that our only need is for God. Elisha followed God's call but as Jesus discovered, others can find it difficult.

Second Reading

Galatians 5:1, 13-18

Our freedom comes in the guidance of the Spirit.

Gospel Reading

Luke 9:51-62

Discipleship is resolute, unpredictable but committed.

Reflection

Our first reading is a story of prophetic succession where we have two of the great figures of the Hebrew bible together, and the exchange has a somewhat terse character. There are a few things to unpack first up. The prophet is one who speaks the mind of God: rather than foretells the future; the prophet speaks the will of God into the present. With Moses, Elijah is seen as the greatest of the prophets, and so his successor too has importance in the religious imagination of the people. Elisha will live up to this.

The episode is under the direction of God: true prophets are called by God and speak and act the divine will. Elijah and Elisha are true prophets.

Elijah accepts the concept of succession. His prophetic gifts are not his to own and retain. He is one who does the will of God, and there is a time for this to pass to another. There is a side lesson here for all of us: our leadership, our ownership has its time, and it is important to be able to let go. The narrative however picks up on the obedience of Elijah.

In the transition, Elisha has a choice. Yet he is not entirely free. To walk away from the will of God as delivered by the prophet is no small thing, and the prophets often speak of how they are compelled to speak. So, there is choice, and there is an initial hesitancy in Elisha, with a desire to say farewell to his parents. Elijah looks askance at this, and the anointed successor understands the calling and breaks with the family. In true prophet style, that is unpredictable to those outside the mentality, Elisha makes a definitive break with the family, burning the plough, cooking the oxen and feeding meat to the servants. He is leaving the family a clear message that he is no longer theirs but belongs with Elijah as a servant.

This reading is set for us as an accompaniment to the Gospel. Elisha's is a stark calling, and he responds definitively. Yet there are points in it that stand well in their own right. The need to be able to let go is part of Elijah's own journey. Nor does he get to choose his successor. This is not always an easy lesson for parents, leaders, anyone in a community. I suspect it is not a straightforward reality for anyone engaged in the Plenary Council. There has to be trust in God's doing. With this, Elisha strikes out on his own path. He goes from having servants and livelihood and wealth to being the servant of a wandering ageing prophet. He embraces the choice to take up the divine plan. It is an unembellished reading but one full of drama and conviction.

The readings from the New Testament literature often do not match the Gospel, but there is a happy resonance here. It is built around freedom, but to embrace the freedom God offers is to embrace love of neighbour. There is also here the correlation between freedom and the movement away from selfish desires and mere pleasing of ourselves. Within this is the ongoing teaching of Paul that being in God is not equated with obeying the Law, but rather obeying the Spirit. And so, in this passage from Galatians, the Apostle brings together four dynamic concepts. Freedom in the Spirit is evidenced in love of neighbour and unselfishness rather than greed and self-satisfaction.

Whereas with the Elijah/Elisha passage there is a sense of call and radical response, here with Paul there is the freedom that comes with obedience to the Spirit and its evidence in a life of love.

For some scholars, the first sentence of our Gospel is one of the most telling in the Gospel, and perhaps in the life of Jesus. It looks innocent enough, but it signals a transition in the mindset of Jesus. Across his ministry there is given to us a sense that he will one day confront 'Jerusalem', the city itself and the powers that reside there. Luke captures that moment in Jesus' own thought with this single line that he resolutely determined to journey to the Holy City. It is worth being mindful here of the great journey narrative in this Gospel. Jesus is not going on a mere pilgrimage to the city but is taking a step in the divinely driven journey from Galilee to Jerusalem (and onwards to the whole world in the Acts of the Apostles). This sentence is the moment of acceptance by Jesus that his fate is not in his hands, rather he is obedient to the divine will. In a sense, we have here the beginning of the Passion.

It follows then that the next set of passages are about discipleship. Jesus' obedience and resolute stance are the context for following the master.

The disciples do not fare well in the first story, one of rejection by the Samaritan village. The villagers have a narrowed vision, deeply wrought into their culture and faith, and cannot move beyond it to accept Jesus. Jerusalem is not their religious capital, and they cannot accept that Jesus would take that route. Yet the response is not fire and destruction. They are left free, but with their own decision. Discipleship does not presume acceptance, nor offer damnation.

The second story places discipleship before stability. Following Jesus has unexpected twists and turns, and there is no guarantee of rest. The animals may fare better.

The third and fourth encounters are somewhat of a pair and are written up with reference to the Elijah/Elisha story in the opening reading. Discipleship is forward looking. It is to journey with Jesus, not to look behind at what is left. It is a choice with effort: it is to put a hand to the plough. It is to proclaim the Gospel.

Returning to the opening words of the passage, discipleship is to follow as Jesus himself followed: to turn towards Jerusalem and not to look back.

With the thrust of Pope Francis towards missionary discipleship, these readings carry some of the characteristics that are entailed in taking up this challenge. Discipleship is under the example of Jesus. Our discipleship mirrors his. It has hard moments and difficult choices. Yet it is not damning or self-righteous. There is something about 'letting go' that characterises our reading for today. Though these are not the only characteristics of following Jesus, they are put before us this week as a reminder that the setting of discipleship is the Passion. We need also be mindful that the setting of the Passion is the Resurrection.

Prayer of the Faithful

Introduction

Through the voice of the psalmist, we declared ourselves to have God as our inheritance. Therefore, we have the desire to offer our needs to God.

Petitions

Let us pray for the leaders of our Church: Pope Francis and all the clergy, lay and religious leaders. May they always see eternal life as our inheritance and help us to achieve it through their prayer and example.

(Pause) Lord hear us OR We pray to the Lord.

Let us pray for the leaders of our world that they will work towards peace and always discourage war. May they find purpose in love of their own people rather than power over many.

(Pause) Lord hear us OR We pray to the Lord.

Let us pray for the Plenary Council members that they will work courageously towards resolutions that will make for positive change in the Church in Australia.

(Pause) Lord hear us OR We pray to the Lord.

Let us pray for all those who find it difficult to follow Christ. May they find a place for the Holy Spirit in their hearts and have the strength to turn to Christ.

(Pause) Lord hear us OR We pray to the Lord.

Let us pray for all those who are suffering from the pandemic;; physically, economically or spiritually. May they find strength and peace through others to move to a better way of living.

(Pause) Lord hear us OR We pray to the Lord.

Let us pray for those who suffer from the results of climate change. May they find a way through the trauma with the help of good neighbours.

(Pause) Lord hear us OR We pray to the Lord.

Let us pray for ourselves that we will work towards becoming a more Christ-centred and missionary church.

(Pause) Lord hear us OR We pray to the Lord.

Conclusion

God our Father, we bring these prayers with the understanding that they will be answered through the power of the Spirit and in the name of Jesus, the Christ.

Amen.

Music selections by Alessio Loiacono and Chris deSilva

Title	AOV1	AOV2	AOVK	AOVNG	GA	CWB	CWBII	S&S1	S&S2
Be thou my vision	9					733	455		
Centre of my life		170			444				
Come and follow me				25					
For the journey			128						
For you are my God	178								
Glorious in majesty							374		
Jesus Christ, you are my life							523		
Lead me, Lord								107	
Lord, be my vision						733			
Lord of all creation, to you be all praise					423	739	543		
O Christ, the great foundation					483		565		
Praise God, from whom all blessings flow	10				384	710	394		
Praise, my soul, the king of heaven	78					789	588		
Praise to you, O Christ our Saviour	28				407		587		
Seek ye first	48				456		594	160	
The servant song		169			487		461		
The summons				149	502		645	137	
We want to live like you Jesus			32						
We will serve the Lord								145	

Psalms Selected by Chris deSilva and Angela McCarthy

Psalm 15: *You are my inheritance, O Lord.*

	CWB	GA	JOBC	JOBF	LPC	PM
Psalm 15	387		pg. 74		pg. 110	

Music selections by Michael Mangan

Children of the light (SYJ) [CHILDREN: Gathering, Recessional]

A life of love (TT/SYJ) [Gifts, Recessional]

Love God, love each other (LCC) [CHILDREN: Gathering, Gifts, Recessional]