

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

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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# Reflections on the Gospel

## A PASSION FOR LIFE

Today's Gospel begins at a turning point in the Gospel of Luke. Like the Servant figure in Isaiah 50:7, Jesus 'sets his face' as he sets out on the long journey to Jerusalem that will climax in his suffering and death.

When a Samaritan village proves inhospitable to messengers that Jesus sends before him, two disciples propose a violent response: call down fire from heaven. But violence is not Jesus' way to deal with rejection. What he would bring—to Jerusalem and to the world—is peace (19:41-44; 2:14).

But Jesus does give very demanding responses to three people who offer themselves as companions on his journey. To the first he responds that following him will mean a wandering life of risky reliance on hospitality, with no guarantee of secure lodging.

The prophet Elijah allowed his disciple Elisha to go home and bid farewell to his parents (1 Kings 19:16,19-21). Jesus, by contrast, insists to two other would be followers that even the most sacred family obligations must yield to the claims of the Kingdom, which is about rescuing human beings for life.

The Jesus who confronts us here may seem unusually harsh. But it is important to keep in mind that the other side of this stance is the passion for human lives that drives him on. He is on the march now to a conflict with demonic forces that seek to dehumanise and destroy the world. Those who would seek to rescue people for life and for love must share both his passion and the hardships it entails.

Brendan Byrne, SJ

# THE SAVING WORD

THIRTEENTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME / C

30 JUNE 2019

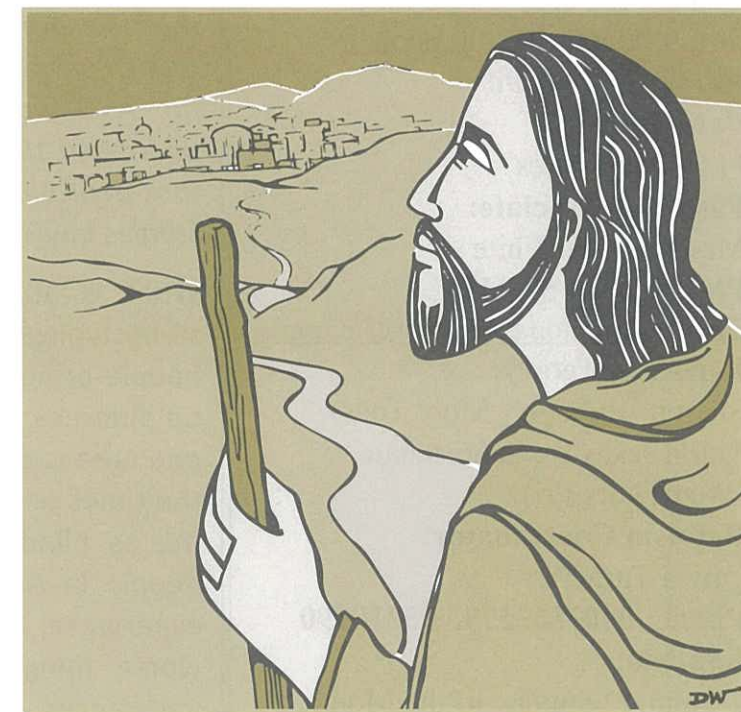
A reading from the first book of the Kings  
*Elisha rose and followed Elijah and became his servant.*

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.

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.



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.