

Thirteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time

A young man was very excited because he just won a ticket to the Super Bowl. His excitement lessened as he realized his seat was in the back of the stadium. As he searched the rows ahead of him for a better seat, he saw an empty one right next to the field. He approached the man sitting next to the empty seat and asked if it was taken. The man replied, "No." Amazed the young man asked, "How could someone pass up a seat like this?" The older gentleman responded, "That's my wife's seat. We've been to every Super Bowl together since the day we were married but she has passed away." "Oh, how sad," the man said. "I'm sorry to hear that, but couldn't you find a friend or relative to come with you?" "No," the man said, "They're all at the funeral."

Dear Friends,

We start ordinary time this week. This Sunday's liturgy brings us a good start. Following Jesus tells us to be ready for more surprises. Soren Kierkegaard, a famous philosopher, and theologian writes, "what Jesus wants is followers not admirers. He never asks for admirers, worshippers, or adherents. No, he calls disciples. It is not adherents of a teaching, but followers of a life, Christ is looking for." He further continues to explain that What then, is the difference between an admirer and a follower? A follower is or strives to be what he admires. An admirer, however, keeps himself personally detached. He fails to see that what is admired involves a claim upon him, and thus he fails to be or strive to be what he admires.

He gives two examples from the scripture for admirers. Judas was an admirer and then became a traitor. Another example is Nicodemus (John 3) who is an admirer and never became a follower. You can read it later the whole chapter how he plays it safe. The admirer never makes any true sacrifices. He always plays it safe.

All the readings today give examples of how to be a follower of Jesus or be a disciple of Jesus. Sometimes we feel like Elisha that we are not yet ready to say yes to God's call. Elijah called Elisha for God to be his successor. There was a little hesitancy in Elisha's behavior. Then he showed himself ready by demonstrating his willingness through feast and leaving his old life behind. He followed Elijah to show his faithfulness to God.

In the Gospel, Jesus asked the disciples to followers or disciples. Disciples must be capable of leaving possessions, responsibilities and cherished relationships in order to be fully committed to the reign of God.

In our history, people try to follow in two ways. in early 1960's people try to give a literal approach to following Jesus. They tried to look like how he looked or how the western

artist painted (wearing white robes, growing a beard, walking bare foot and extra). the second way of following is trying to imitate to copy his actions. though it helps us to do our ministry, but it is not the end of discipleship. True imitation is not a question of trying to look like Jesus, nor of trying to duplicate his actions.

What is it?

John of the Cross, a Mystic offers some answers. In his view, we imitate Jesus when we try to imitate his motivation, when we try to do things for the same reason he did. For him, that is how one "puts on Christ." We enter real discipleship when, like Jesus, we have as our motivation the desire (proper regnum Dei) to draw all things into one—into one unity of heart, one family of love.

He, then offers some advice regarding how this can be done. We should begin, he says, by reading the scriptures and meditating the life on Jesus. Then we should pray to Christ and ask him to instill in us his desire, longing, and motivation. In essence, we should pray to Jesus and ask him to make us feel the way he felt while he was on earth.