

THE EXCUSES OF A WOULD-BE DISCIPLE 6/30/19

1 KGS 19:16B, 19-21, GAL 5:1, 13-18, LK 9:51-62

God calls us to be free to follow him. The call to be a disciple involves sacrifice. For instance Elisha was to leave his lucrative cattle business and became a disciple of Elijah. In the gospel reading, the would-be disciples of Jesus were also required to leave something behind to become disciples. Unfortunately, they had all the excuses why they could not be committed disciples. The first said to Jesus "I will follow you wherever you go". Jesus says to him "Foxes have dens and birds of the sky have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to rest his head." Anyone who wants to be Jesus' follower must deny himself... (Matthew 16:24).

Then comes the second person: Jesus calls him out, 'come and follow me' and his response was 'let me go and bury my father first... but Jesus says to him, 'let the dead bury their dead but you go and proclaim the kingdom of God'. This man's response could probably mean I can only follow you after.... Jesus' response literary means that 'leave that anxiety alone, tomorrow will take care of itself. The third would-be disciple wants to go and bid farewell to his beloved family and Jesus says to him 'no one who sets his hands to the plow and looks to what was left behind is fit for the kingdom of heaven.' Where do you fall?

These responses from the would-be disciples of Jesus are worth our consideration.

1. Discipleship is total commitment. 2. Discipleship is putting Jesus first, no matter what. 3. Discipleship is focusing on Jesus and resisting the temptation of looking back. So, let us ask ourselves, are we Jesus' disciples? Let's stop the excuses. Jesus is saying that there can never be a justifiable excuse to fail to follow him to the end.

St. Paul admonishes us in the letter to the Galatians to live by the Spirit by putting to death the deeds of the flesh (Gal 5:18). By overcoming the excuses...For instance, before you say I didn't know, can you find out first? Before you take that decisions, can you say a little prayer to ask for the spirit's direction? Discipleship is a spiritual journey with Jesus, let us be resolute in our decision and stay committed; let us avoid the excuses and live the joy of being his disciples.

Praised be Jesus Christ...Now and forever!

Fr. Francis Odoom

