

13th Sunday in Ordinary Time — June 30, 2019

I want to thank you again for the many gifts and wonderful colors of Fidget Spinners you gave me ! So, this week I would like to talk about 'Scotch Whiskey' Na..... Just a joke !

The fidget spinners are a powerful example of the nature of our God Our God is not static in any way but He is dynamic and constantly in motion. God is always moving and directing Himself toward us, and is obviously inviting and directing us toward Him. As I said last week, the relationship that I had with God when I was a child is not going to work very well in my adult life. I am not static, I am constantly in motion, dynamic, and just as I grow so should all of my life experiences, and most especially so should my relationship with my Living God grow.

So, I had a great deal of feedback from you during the course of this past week, and many of your questions were surrounding the issues of 'How do I know I am growing in my relationship with God?' A great question ! Thanks for asking ! It is a real important question, and is very central to my development in the Christian life. If I am not growing in my life in Christ, then what is happening ? Well, the answer is really pretty simple Yes ? What is the answer ? Well, I am either 'stagnant' or 'going backward.' Yes.

So, I was asking you the questions last week :
Have you grown to a stage of really asking God to help you in making the really important decisions in your life ? Do you seek God's advice when you are faced with really big decisions in your life ? Or, am I more inclined to work hard at making those decisions myself, and then I bring that decision to God and ask

Him to bless the decision I have made and to 'by the way' make it the right decision ! Because after all God, I think it is the right decision.

I was delighted to hear from a number of you who were seriously grappling with that question that issue and even an acknowledgement from some of you that you never thought in that vein that you were never taught to pray or to ask in such a fashion. I don't believe any of us were taught in that vein ! We may have been taught to go to God and ask Him what you should do, and He will tell you ! That is all good and well but I can assure that is not easy work and I am certain that I have circumvented that process many times growing-up, and many times also as an adult. That should not be surprising to any of us because if you have not experienced that, then it is going to be even more difficult to experience when He is prompting you and guiding you in the power of His Holy Spirit.

So the big question for your reflection throughout this coming week : Are you more likely to bring your questions to God in prayer? Or, are you more likely to bring Him the answer to those questions, and then ask Him to bless your decisions ?

Just take a little time on that during the week. It will tell you a lot about your relationship, but it will also provide you powerful direction.

So, looking at today's Readings — they are a powerful teaching on this subject. The theme of all 3 Readings is a call to Discipleship. An invitation to surrender to God in the act of being His Disciple. But, it is really hard work it is more than just saying a 'Verbal' "YES" to His invitation. The bottom line is: There are 'NO PART

TIME' Disciples because there is no 'Part Time Work' available in His Kingdom There is only one JOB One Vocation ... in His Kingdom and that is being all in!

a). The 1st Reading The passing of the torch ... from Elijah to Elisha But, let me kiss my father and mother goodbye

b). 2nd Reading For freedom Christ set us free; so stand firm and do not submit again to the yoke of slavery. Freedom is not freedom from God's Plan for us. True freedom is found, and experienced only when we are in Him and genuinely attempt to live in Him.

c). The Gospel is a powerful portrait of all of this. Although the Apostles have been with Him for some time now they are still learning what it means to be a Disciple that is encouraging for us no matter how far along we are with Him, we are still learners being disciplined in His way.

Let me make a few remarks about the Gospel passage to begin with. We are in the Gospel of Saint Luke, and we are at a major transitional point of His Gospel. It is the so-called Travel Narrative or, The Journey to Jerusalem. Jesus has a new focus a new vision a new direction He is resolutely set for Jerusalem. In this section, Luke is going to place all of the Ethical Teachings of Jesus in context of the Journey to the Cross (Jerusalem).

We are going to follow this journey very carefully over the next 20 weeks right up to Thanksgiving. As a result of this travel setting, we are going to get a very particular understanding of the journey of the Christian Life based on the Cross. We are going to

learn extraordinary things about what it means to be a follower of Christ and what the true cost of Discipleship is. For some, it proved to be just too much and, today in our world it proves to be way too much for some, also.

But here is what I am going to ask you to do Join me in reading and learning about this Journey, and you will learn a lot about Jesus and what it means to be a disciple of His. The Journey begins in (Luke 9:51) please follow along, and I promise the journey will be fulfilling and enlightening.

Luke gives an account of the radical demands of what is involved in Following Christ. Our Reading today (obviously influenced by the story of Elisha and the plow from the 1st Reading) may appear rather harsh. However, it is but an introduction to the many challenges we will encounter in this journey this effort to surrender. The main point of the Travel Narrative is simple there are many, many distractions in our daily lives which we can set down as reasons for not choosing to be a Disciple. And we will discover many of them as we journey with Saint Luke between now and Thanksgiving.... Teachings that Jesus will provide us for our personal growth and relationship with Him.

The Good Samaritan The Rich Fool (with all of His blessings ...but unable to enjoy them) The Great Banquet (seeking places of honor) and of course, Luke's great story of the Prodigal Son and all of these given that we might Trust Him and choose Discipleship.

So, today as we begin what do you see? The idea of retribution is not part of the character of would-be disciples. Trying to punish

or pay back is not a mark of the Kingdom of God. But, putting Him first is the Key. It may not appear to make sense at the outset. But, it is Everything in the final analysis. It is a solid promise and one that the Disciples had to find out the hard wayand indeed we have to find out the hard way, also. Following Jesus in the world is genuinely hard work, but the rewards are out of this world.

— Fr. Gerry Hurley