

My dear people of God, through our baptism all of us are called **to serve God and be his disciples**. The readings have given us examples of those willing to give up everything to serve God and those who find it difficult to follow God with total dedication. Indeed, if God calls you to be a Christian, "He bids you to come and die" to your old self, your egotism and all vices, in order to become a new creature in Christ. Let us meditate on the readings.

Elijah passing by Elisha, threw his mantle over him (1 Kings 19:19). While this appears to be a strange thing to do, in those days, it meant two things. First of all, because the mantle represents the personality and rights of its owner (Ruth 3:9), its casting over Elisha meant that Elisha now belonged to Elijah. Secondly, because the hair-shirt mantle was part of the official dress (2 Kings. 1:8; Zech. 13:4) of the prophets, to cast it over another person meant **a formal investing with the authority that comes from being initiated in the membership of prophets**.

As a public sign of renouncing his previous life, Elisha offered a sacrificial meal on the spot. He slaughtered the yoke of oxen and used his farming equipment to make a fire on which he boiled their flesh. Then he shared the meat with his neighbors (1 Kings 19:21; 1 Sam. 6:14; 2 Sam. 24:22- 3). Having done all this, Elisha followed Elijah. From this example, we can **see true discipleship**. Elisha did not hesitate to answer God's call. Through the action of Elijah, Elisha believed that God was calling him and **he immediately gave his "yes."** His wholehearted obedience meant disposing of all the riches that he possessed.

In today's Gospel we heard that someone came to Jesus and said that he would follow Him wherever He goes (Lk. 9:57). To him, Jesus said, "Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests; but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head" (Lk. 9:58). From this response, we learn two things. First of all, from the words, "**foxes have holes,**" which is symbolic of "**hiding,**" Jesus was saying **that He does not force anyone into following Him**. Secondly, by opining that foxes and birds have a resting place, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay His head, **Jesus was indicating a true discipleship, He expects total dedication** (Mt. 6:24). The fact is that **in true discipleship, there is no turning back**. There is no turning back to the worldly ways. As followers of Christ, we are expected to continuously move forward by growing in our spiritual lives through the grace of God the Father and the sanctifying power of the Holy Spirit in the Most Holy Name of Jesus.

St. Paul, in the second reading, opines that Christians are free people, but we should not use our freedom to sin, rather, to serve one another through love. Christians are called to walk in the Spirit in order not to gratify the desire of the flesh, but to please God. Since the Spirit is our life, let us allow ourselves to be guided by the Spirit. As a matter of fact, we can only be successful as Christians, if we allow the Spirit to lead us and also to love God and one another (Gal.5:14).

Finally, my dear friends, all of us have been called by God and we need to die to our old self, egotism and all vices, in order to please God as new creatures in Christ. God needs our total dedication in any vocation we are called to serve him. In any vocation we have been called let us consider this truth according to our callings, be it the religious life, the married life or the single life, are we growing spiritually in our callings? Are we being loyal to our master Jesus Christ? **Are we being true disciples?** At the end of each announcement, the person will say ... the church is always in need of volunteers, do you feel within you to do something, but you are hesitating. Beloved let today's readings animate you to have the spirit of Christ-a task without a moment's delay. May Christ free us from darkness and enlighten us into the way of peace. Amen!