

Reflection

For Sunday, June 26, 2016

Answering the Call

13th Sunday in Ordinary Time

<http://www.usccb.org/bible/readings/062616.cfm>

1 Kings 19:16b, 19-21

Galatians 5:1, 13-18

Luke 9:51-62

“When was the last time you volunteered your time to try to help your community?” That was the question this past week on *The Book of Questions Calendar* that I purchased at the beginning of 2016. Hmm, I thought to myself, volunteering... I pictured myself raising my hand at some committee meeting.

Every morning around breakfast time, Jim and I share a reading for the day from his devotional and the Scripture passage referenced. We discuss it and then ask “the question of the day from the calendar.” From breakfast we go about our work. We are at [Biblical Tamar Park](#) in the Arava Desert in Israel. Volunteers! Jim is from Texas and I’m from Wisconsin.



As I read “the question” last Tuesday, I asked Jim, “When was the last time you or I ‘unvolunteered?’” And we laughed. This is my third summer spent in the heat of the Israeli desert. Jim has been here multiple times. Jim decided, when he retired, that he would spend the rest of his life volunteering. He’s helped build a playground by the source of the Amazon in Peru and worked in Cameroon as well as Nigeria. Both of us have volunteered in our local churches in the US. Our discussed common goal is to help any way we can to spread the kingdom.

Is volunteering like answering the call in this Sunday’s readings? We would hope so! Spreading the kingdom today is both similar and dissimilar to scriptural times. Most of us don’t have a prophet throwing the cloak of his ministry over us or Jesus himself inviting us. In that way, the call may be dissimilar. But similar in so many ways, one of them being questioning its genuineness.

How do we know when a call comes? How do we know if it is from God or is just a crazy idea popping up in our heads? Jim can attest that some of those crazy ideas are genuine calls. If it won’t go away, that may be one sure sign it is genuine. We can’t always expect a confirmation of our call from the people around us. Just reading about Elisha’s sacrificing all his oxen seems foolish at first glance. Can you imagine what his family, friends, and coworkers thought about that? How they must have talked during the great feast that followed his sacrifice! He really burned his bridges along with his plows! He gave all he had to follow his call.

Excuses. Jesus invited and got excuses. Just questioning the idea can be an excuse for not responding to the call. The idea is just too crazy! What I heard from some friends and acquaintances was that going to Israel is walking into the lion's den. Iran, Iraq, Saudi Arabia, Syria are much too close for comfort. And then there are the constant threats of [conflict between Jews and Palestinians](#). But then, who would have guessed that going to a club in Orlando could be so disastrous? (We are praying for all involved!)

What are our excuses for not answering the call? An older lady from Saskatchewan stopped here with a tour last week. She asked about volunteering, but had no idea how to do it? What about visas? Is there a lot of red tape? I assured her that it was an easy process. Was she too old? No, I'm seventy-seven and can still do all the tasks I'm asked. Jim started volunteering at seventy-one and you should see him go! He says, "God has blessed me all my life. I want to give him all that is left." No excuses!

What is God calling you to do? Listening for God's ideas can be the hardest part. They may seem really crazy! But so was following a wandering Jew who had nowhere to lay his head. Is there a crazy idea in the back of your head? Might it be from the Spirit? What excuse is holding you back? Come!

Pat DeGroot, ObISB

PRAYER

**Lord Jesus,
we thank you for the wondrous gift of Your Incarnation.
Just as the Blessed Virgin Mary was used to bring You into this world,
help us to use our time and talents to bring the Good News into the world.
May we never forget the love You have for all of us,
and may we never forget to share that love with others.
Amen.**

—Closing Prayer from the Stations of the Nativity from the Institute on Religious Life.

NOTICES

REMEMBERING OUR BROTHERS & SISTERS IN ORLANDO

In light of the tragic events that took place in Orlando, Liturgical Publications is making available free artwork to encourage parishioners to remember in prayer all those affected. LPi customers can find the artwork on the Art & Media Portal. If you do not print your bulletin with LPi, [click here](#).

PETER'S PENCE COLLECTION

Many dioceses will take up the annual Peter's Pence collection to support the charitable work of the Holy Father on the weekend of June 25-26. The USCCB offers parish resources on its website [here](#).

FORTNIGHT FOR FREEDOM

The theme of this year's Fortnight for Freedom is Witnesses to Freedom. Each year dioceses around the country arrange special events to highlight the importance of defending religious freedom. The Fortnight for Freedom is from June 21—the vigil of the feasts of St. John Fisher and St. Thomas More—to July 4, Independence Day. For more information and resources for your parish, click [here](#).

To learn more about LPi's services and publications designed to help you build a vibrant parish please visit our website: www.4LPi.com

Liturgical Publications Inc
2875 S. James Drive • New Berlin, WI 53151
(800) 950-9952 ext. 2469

Send email address changes to: lpiconnections@4LPi.com

To opt out of receiving this midweek reflection contact: lpiconnections@4LPi.com

Copyright ©2016, Liturgical Publications Inc. All rights reserved.