



# WEEKLY GOSPEL REFLECTION



13th Sunday Ordinary Time - C

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*Jesus set his face to go to Jerusalem. Luke 9:51*

The life of Jesus is a series of well planned and executed events. There is an overarching and divine plan. This passage from the Gospel of Luke (9:51-62) hints of this plan. To fulfill it, Jesus and his disciples must journey toward Jerusalem where Jesus will confront his death and glorification in the Holy City.

The journey begins as it ends with rejection of Jesus. The hostility between the Jews and Samaritans was a major conflict between the two groups at that time. The Samaritans did not go to the temple in Jerusalem to worship. Thus the purposeful journey of Jesus was to seek them, but he was rebuked and unwelcome in the Samaritan town. James and John, *"the sons of thunder"* (see Mark 3:17) are fiercely loyal to Jesus. They want to burn down the town when the people refuse to welcome Jesus. James and John are displaying neither love of God nor love of neighbor in complete dismissal of the "God-Self-Neighbor" commandment of Jesus. The life-changing spirituality of Divine Mercy has not yet taken hold in their hearts. So Jesus points out the downward spiral that has them in a choke hold and directs them to push onward to the holiness that will be found in a welcoming village.

As the journey unfolds, a disciple declares he will follow Jesus wherever he goes. But Jesus tamps down the disciple's zeal with a dose of realism: *"Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests; but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head."* Jesus' way consists not in belonging to the present chaos of a dissipating world. Instead, the journey Jesus is on constantly confronts the evil of the world. In the end, this struggle will bring about a new covenant between God and humankind, a restored life-sustaining community in a movement of love of "God-Self-Neighbor." This new order calls for disciples to be in this world, but not of it.

The second part of the journey for Jesus and his disciples is summed up in the words of Jesus, *"Follow me."* These words reveal the great urgency of Christ's call. Jesus is clear that the need to proclaim the kingdom of God as first priority where neither a death in the family nor a desire to go back and say farewell to family can be allowed to hinder or delay the journey. For the neophyte disciples, it takes fortitude to overturn the earth significantly enough for the seed of the gospel to be planted. In scriptural terms, *"No one who puts a hand to the plough and looks back is fit for the kingdom of God."*

We are called to break the chains that bind us and set us free -- free to embrace the heartfelt joy that Christ in his divine mercy gifts to us. Thus liberated through knowledge, understanding and wisdom our gifted cup of joy runs over for *"the Lord is the portion of my inheritance and my cup..." Ps 16:5.* Reflect on the daily call to seek inspiration that equips us to proclaim the kingdom of God. Our hearts greatest desire is to be a sojourner with Jesus on the Pilgrims Way of the Cross toward the New Jerusalem. Journey and seek perfection through charity and mercy, as Christ heals you, melding persistence with service, charity and sacrifice.

*"You are my inheritance, O Lord, show me the path to life." Ps 16*

**A reading from the holy gospel according to Luke.**

When the days drew near for him to be taken up,  
Jesus set his face to go to Jerusalem.  
And he sent messengers ahead of him.  
On their way they entered a village of the Samaritans  
to make ready for Jesus;  
but the Samaritans did not receive him,  
because his face was set toward Jerusalem.

When his disciples James and John saw it, they said,  
*"Lord, do you want us to command fire  
to come down from heaven and consume them?"*  
But Jesus turned and rebuked them.  
Then they went on to another village.

As they were going along the road, someone said to him,  
*"I will follow you wherever you go."*

And Jesus said to him,  
*"Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests;  
but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head."*

To another Jesus said,  
*"Follow me."*

But he replied,  
*"Lord, first let me go and bury my father."*

But Jesus said to him,  
*"Let the dead bury their own dead;  
but as for you, go and proclaim the kingdom of God."*

Another said,  
*"I will follow you, Lord;  
but let me first say farewell to those at my home."*

Jesus said to him,  
*"No one who puts a hand to the plough and looks back  
is fit for the kingdom of God."*

**The Gospel of the Lord**