

Thirteenth Sunday - C -2019
1 Kings 19.16,19-21///Gal. 5.1,13-19///Luke 9.51-62

→as you well know...my favorite movie of all time is “The Wizard of Oz” and recently I came across a book entitled.... “*and Toto too....The Wizard of Oz as a Spiritual Adventure.*”

→it is authored by Nathan Castle, a Dominican priest who serves as pastor and director of the Catholic Community at Stanford University....

→by chance, as I was paging through the book...I came across a chapter pertaining to the very same gospel reading we just heard....

→we all know too well the story of the Wizard of Oz....

→a young girl living in Kansas is one day carried off to a strange land,

→at first she enjoys exploring the new land but then the excitement wears off and she gets homesick

→she asks for directions on how to get back and is told that only the wizard knows the way back

--“well how can I find the wizard” she asks and the Munchkins tell her to simply follow the yellow brick road to Emerald City...

→along the way she meets a scarecrow...he’s depressed because he has no brain and can’t think for himself....

→Dorothy suggests that surely the wizard will give him a brain...and so he joins the journey

→next they meet the tin man...he’s depressed because he has no heart and so therefore can’t love

→ “come along with us” says Dorothy...I am sure the wizard can help you as well...and he joins the journey

→finally they come across the cowardly lion...depressed because he has no courage...and so he too joins the travelers as set off together....

→after a difficult journey they arrive at the Emerald City expecting to see the wizard

→and then comes still another disappointment...the wizard won't grant their wishes until they capture the broomstick of the wicked witch and bring it to him

→and what happens....well in the process of capturing the broomstick

→the scarecrow discovers – much to his surprise that he does have a brain and can think

→the tin man discovers –that he does have a heart and can love

→and the lion discovers –to his surprise –that he does have courage and can be brave

→in the end...the wizard merely helps each of Dorothy's friends discover what they already had....

→well....the story of the Wizard of Oz bears much similarity to the words of Jesus in today's gospel

→because what the wizard did for Dorothy and her three friends, is the same of what Jesus does for the three people who want to follow him

→three different people today say they will follow Jesus...but first they have to bury their father and say good bye to their family

→to which Jesus responds...let the dead bury their dead....and no one fit for the kingdom of God...looks behind.

i.o.w.Jesus helps them discover what they already had.the ability to follow him...what they lack, however is **the motivation and determination** to do just that....

--this is what the wizard did for Dorothy and her companions...and it is the same for Jesus and his followers in today's gospel.

→someone once said....

"Our chief want in life is have somebody who will make us do what we can."

→the wizard shows Dorothy and her friends that they had the ability to do what they wanted to do....their problem was that they lacked motivation to do it

--likewise...Jesus makes it clear that those who want to follow him also have the ability to do it...but they lacked the motivation to do it...to make it a priority in life...

→and might not that be the same for you and me as well at times....

→what the wizard did...and what Jesus did...we too must do for others

i.o.w. as disciples of Jesus Christ....we must help one another do what we are capable of doing

PAUSE

I believe the challenge and lesson of this gospel story today is for you and me to be true examples to one another when it comes to our faith....our beliefs....our responsibilities and our obligations.

→being a member of the Body of Christ.....is not just a matter of saying we are....it is about living the way Christ wants us to....

→we hear Jesus say... "let the dead bury their dead"

→I have always understood this to be about...a young man who wanted to wait until his father died...no matter how long that might be....before leaving and following Jesus...

and what Jesus is saying is that...there isn't time to wait...

→how many times do we find ourselves saying the very same thing...

→I don't have to tell you how many engaged couples, or parents of newborns...or those experiencing life-changing events, have said the very same thing...

...when I get settled...when the kids get older...when things become less hectic...then I'll begin going to Church and spend more time praying?

→and these day... the excuses are endless for not living a life of faith...

→in fact, I saw a sign recently outside a church that said.... "if "excuses" came to Church....there would be standing room only!"

→we all busy today....and where we chose to spend our time, our energy tells us what is important to us

→and may be the devils greatest temptation is thinking we have lots of time....

→we can pray later....come to church next week....live our faith when it's convenient....practice what we believe when it works to our advantage

→yet the message that Jesus wants to make part of our lives...the message he wants us to carry out in our homes and world...is the message we celebrate today...

→to help one another do what we are capable of doing....

PAUSE

The wizard did that for Dorothy, the Scarecrow, Tin Man and Lion

Jesus did that for his followers...and he does it for you and me.

→...to simply do what we already know and are capable of doing.