

13th Ordinary Sunday
June 30, 2019
“The War Within”

1Kgs 19:16...21

Gal 5:1...18

Lk 9:51-62

My Brothers and Sisters in the Lord –

As human beings, we will never be free from conflict. However, this inescapable conflict is not necessarily between nations and states. The conflict of which I speak is the warfare within ourselves!

There is a never-ending struggle within every one of us between what we should do or not do, between obligations and carefreeness, between what's right and what's wrong. Fundamentally, it is a never-ending war between good and evil. This conflict has been part of human life from the moment of our creation on this planet.

The readings for today have a great deal to say about this conflict and the freedom God gave us to choose.

In the First Book of Kings, Elijah, tired and worn-out, had complained to God. God answered him and told him to prepare Elisha to succeed him.

When Elisha asked to say his goodbyes, Elijah said that that decision was not up to him. God had called Elisha, and whatever Elisha did was between himself and God alone. So Elisha said his goodbyes and used all of his resources to bless those he left behind. It was a deep and personal commitment on Elisha's part – And he made sure that there would never be any temptation to return. Elisha really threw himself into God's work!

In the Gospel selection, Jesus resolutely started on his final journey to Jerusalem. Jesus knew that this decision was the beginning of the end for him. Nevertheless, he embraced God's will and made it his own!

The Samaritans rejected Jesus and his disciples, because Samaritans rejected anything to do with Jerusalem. Angered by their failure at hospitality, James and John wanted to call a terrible destruction upon the Samaritans. They wanted to follow their human instincts, instead of God's permissive will. And Jesus told them just how wrong they were!

As they continued on, three different men heard God's call and wanted to follow Jesus. However, each of them hesitated because they had other concerns. In each case, Jesus told them how important it was always to resolve our conflicts according to God's call and will and time. Following Jesus and embracing his Gospel means always doing what is good, just, and truly best for ourselves and those we love!

Finally, St. Paul has much to say about our inner conflicts in his Letter to the Galatians. He tells us that Jesus came to set us free. The risen Christ has severed the bonds with which satan held us. However, the freedom Christ brought cannot be used to choose things which are unworthy of us.

Unfortunately, the "flesh", that is, all our inferior tendencies, is in constant warfare with our spiritual side. We are both "flesh" and spirit; we are both body and soul. Yet, these must be lived harmoniously with each other – and according to the design of God in whose image we are made!

Unfortunately, any addiction we have is a sure sign that we are not truly free, and are, instead, still slaves. Prescription drugs, alcohol, tobacco, sex, the Internet, possessions, power, and control are just to name a few.

All these things, while good in themselves, destroy us if we are enslaved to them. Furthermore, problems in these areas always lead to other problems and conflicts as well!

So, Brothers and Sisters, let us ask for the grace to break with anything unworthy of us – May we resolve all conflicts on the side of what is true and just and best – And may we live each moment by the way of the Gospel and the Spirit of God!

Amen.

June 30, 2019

Msgr. Russell G. Terra