



a Kendall Hunt Company

Thirteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year C, Catechist - RCLB Lectionary



Catechist Background and Preparation

To prepare for the session read all the readings.

1 Kings 19:16b, 19-21

Psalms 16:1-2, 5, 7-8, 9-10, 11

Galatians 5:1, 13-18

Luke 9:51-62

Spend a few minutes reflecting on what these readings mean for you today. Was there a particular reading which appealed to you? Was there a word or image that engaged you?

Read the Word in Liturgy and Catholic Doctrine sections. These give you background on what you will be doing this session. Read over the session outline and make it your own. Check to see what materials you will need for the session.

The Word In Liturgy

This section of the Book of Kings narrates the flight of Elijah into the wilderness, a place of testing and encounter with God. The Lord tells Elijah to anoint Elisha as his successor, a command that is unique in prophetic literature. The cloak thrown over Elisha would have been recognized as the distinctive hairskin garment of the prophet. The overall impact of this story of Yahweh's command to recruit Elisha is to reassure the Jewish people that God's word will continue to be spoken in their midst. Prophecy is guaranteed by the divine initiative, not by any human decision or effort. The twelve yoke of oxen indicates that Elisha was fairly prosperous. It is not entirely clear, however, what the meaning is of the exchange between him and Elijah regarding his farewell to his parents. But the act of slaughtering the oxen and burning his plowing equipment certainly is an expressive indication of his decision to pursue wholeheartedly his new vocation as a prophet.

In the literary plan of Luke's Gospel, the geography of Jesus' ministry takes on deep theological significance. In today's reading we see the important point at which Jesus "firmly resolved" to set out for Jerusalem. And, as scholars have noted, for the next 10 chapters Luke no longer follows the plan of Mark's Gospel, but instead describes Jesus' journey to his ultimate destiny in Jerusalem. All along the way, he instructs his followers in the meaning of true discipleship. We see in this reading that the disciple must be willing to encounter rejection ("the Samaritans would not welcome him"), poverty ("nowhere to lay his head"), sacrifice of one's previous priorities ("come away and proclaim the Kingdom of God"), and a decisive break with one's entire past.

Catholic Doctrine

For Freedom Christ Has Set Us Free

Jesus Christ is our liberator. Through his cross and resurrection the Savior has freed us from

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the tyranny of sin and the power of death. Jesus invites us into communion with the truth, which makes us free (John 8:32). Christian freedom therefore is far from an abstract philosophical ideal. It is the result of a historical event: the victorious death of Jesus; and it is conveyed by union with the person of Christ, experienced in baptism.

The church teaches that human freedom is part of the original order of God's good creation. It is one of the ways in which the human person resembles the Creator. In God's design, the gift of freedom makes it possible for the person to respond to God willingly—not as a slave, but as a beloved daughter or son. The human choice to sin and turn away from God is therefore a profound abuse of the gift of freedom.

The Catholic viewpoint on freedom cannot be discussed without also referring to the responsibility which is ours to direct our actions toward the good that God holds out to us. We have been created as rational beings who are able to initiate and control our own actions. This dignity, bestowed upon us by our Creator, means that we have the capability to learn and grow, to make decisions and act accordingly—as opposed to being driven by blind impulses and passions.

The Second Vatican Council noted that in modern times people prize freedom and eagerly strive for it. But it is often cherished improperly, as if it gives total autonomy and license to an individual. Nothing could be further from the truth of the gospel and Catholic teaching on the freedom we have in Christ. Catholic moral theology holds that freedom is not authentic unless it is in the service of what is good and just. Choosing to do otherwise, to disobey and do evil, abuses the freedom we have in Christ and leads to the “slavery of sin.” Thus, the freedom we are given in Christ is a freedom to act responsibly.

Responsibility for one's actions however can be diminished by ignorance, inadvertence, duress, fear, habit, drugs and psychological factors. For human freedom has been weakened by sin and it is only with God's grace that we are able to strive for what is right and good, giving to our actions their full and proper relationship to the divine plan. Christ redeems us from the sin which held us in bondage and for freedom's sake has set us free.