
28 Monday

MONDAY 13th Week in Ordinary Time
St Irenaeus

Amos 2: 6-10, 13-16
Ps 49: 16-23
Matt 8: 18-22

“Let the dead bury their dead” This radical imperative of Jesus (which has become a common English-language phrase) must have sounded very shocking to those who heard Him speak it. For it contradicted something that was allowed to disciples of the scribes and pharisees and teachers of the Law, namely that burying the dead excused people from certain duties of discipleship. Even Elijah, calling Elisha to become a prophet, allowed him *first* to go say good-bye (though Elisha then also burnt his farm-tools, symbols of his livelihood).

For Jesus, being a disciple of His is something radical and demanding, that takes first priority always, and that’s risky and uncertain. For young people, full of energy and ideals and independent desires, this is certainly a challenge and can be an exciting one. But it sounds not so attractive, perhaps, for the less adventurous, more cautious, who desire a quiet and settled life in which to fulfill their obligations to God and neighbour.

It shouldn’t need something like the recent global economic downturn to make us realize that our world is risky and uncertain anyway. How do we Christians see it? We don’t have any lasting city here, and our true citizenship is in heaven, we know. Yet we have to live and be responsible in this world too, while being called to be holy, disciples of Jesus.

Love is the clue. If we love, we can do anything, nothing is too difficult. No need to be frightened of Jesus’ inviting challenge: loving Him, the risks, uncertainties and priorities fall into place. Such a love is God’s gift, something to be earnestly prayed for.

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