

Homily: 13<sup>th</sup> Sunday: Cycle C: 2016: 1 Kgs 19: 16, 19-21; Ps 16: Gal 5: 1, 13-18; Lk 9: 51-62

*“The Call to Make the Lord our Sole Inheritance”*

1. This week-end’s readings remind us that to be a faithful disciple or follower of the Lord takes a change in attitude - to look forward and not live in the past. What does that mean? **Well faith is a jump into the arms of God, as St. Therese once put it. We have to be willing to go out of our comfort zone and trust God and His Church to guide us on the narrow path that leads to salvation. This goes beyond the ways of reason.** Our ability to reason or draw conclusions is one of the greatest gifts God has given to the human race, but it only goes so far - it can help us understand the natural world, but when it comes to the supernatural world or the world of Faith, it can help us partially understand, but it can also hinder us – if we refuse to go ahead because we don’t fully “understand” the ways of God. **Do we trust Him?** That is what the prophet Elijah is asking the prophet Elisha who is destined to follow Him as prophet of the Lord. Or as Jesus says in the Gospel today, *No one who sets a hand to the plow and looks to what was left behind is fit for the Kingdom of God.*
2. **Is the Lord our sole inheritance?** The psalmist asks us that. **The Lord should be our sole inheritance, but that is a challenge for us human beings. We tend to like to have some type of security blanket on the human level: whether it be money or other material things, in our job or career, or in our human relationships.** For example, one of the saddest things I encounter as a priest is when individuals don’t follow the teachings of the Church in the area of love because they are not willing to trust that the Lord will sustain them, and help them to live a pure life as a single person, or as a person struggling with same sex attraction, or as a married couple that God won’t give them more children than they can handle. **We live in a time of great moral confusion:** as Christians the best thing we can do, as Pope Francis has pointed out in his recent Apostolic Exhortation on *the Joy of Love*, is set the example in our own life by perseverance in the Lord’s ways and trying to humbly follow the Church’s teaching on human love, and so be a light shining in the darkness of our confused world in this area in particular. And not to do it by pointing the finger at others who are not living the moral teachings of the Church, but to try to help them to see the beauty of the Church’s teaching in this area, and to pray for them and

ourselves to do a better job of loving in the way God teaches us to through the Church - to daily have a deeper moral and spiritual conversion to the Lord's ways, and to constantly ask the Lord to heal all of us, especially through the Sacrament of Mercy, Confession, during this Jubilee year of Mercy - so that we can be a better example of His love to others, as we embrace the Lord more and more our inheritance and hopefully inspire others to do the same.

- 3. God gave us the gift of freedom so we could choose what is good, true, beautiful and loving.** Our freedom is not to be used for the flesh - which in St. Paul's theology means the worldly mentality opposed to the ways of God. *Serve one another with love. Don't bite and devour each other with harsh words. If you live by the spirit, you will not gratify the desires of the flesh.* **What is the difference?** St. Paul tells us, building upon the 2<sup>nd</sup> reading today, what **the works of the flesh are** in Galatians 5: 19-21: *lewd conduct, impurity, licentiousness, idolatry, sorcery, hostilities, bickering, jealousy, outbursts of rage, selfish rivalries, dissensions, factions, envy, drunkenness, orgies and the like. I warn you as I warned you before: those who do such things will not inherit the Kingdom of God.* In contrast is **the life of the Spirit** - which means allowing the Holy Spirit to guide our freedom in the ways of goodness, truth, beauty and love. **The works of the Spirit are:** *love, joy, peace, patient endurance, kindness, generosity, faith, mildness and chastity. Against such there is no law. Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified their flesh with its passions and desires. Since we live by the spirit, let us follow the Holy Spirit's lead. Let us never be boastful, or challenging, or jealous toward one another.* May all of us live in faithful trust of the Lord and allow the Holy Spirit to mold us on a daily basis away from the works of the flesh, to live more fully the new life of the Spirit which we received at our Baptism, and which is the seed of eternal life with God in Heaven. God bless you.