

Homily (notes) from Canon Philip Dyson
26th June 2022 - 13th Sunday in Ordinary Time

Readings (Year C): 1st: 1 Kings 19:16. 19-21. Psalm: 15. 2nd: Galatians 5:1. 13-18. **Gospel:** Luke 9:51-62.

Faces matter. It's mainly how we recognise each other. Wearing masks since Covid has changed us so much. Sometimes it has been quite difficult to recognise even people we know well. Our faces are very expressive; often show our mood or our thinking; smiling makes a big difference to all of life. There is often controversy where some traditions have partial or full veils.

St. Luke, doctor/physician, was no doubt used to looking at faces. Luke mentions the **face of Jesus** three times in the opening verses of today's gospel. At least he does in the Greek & older translations. And the way he speaks of it suggests both dedication and urgency. The Greek word for human face used 3 times is lost in our translation.

Douai reads: "He steadfastly set his **face** to go to Jerusalem. And he sent messengers before his **face**: and going into a city of the Samaritans, and they received him not because his **face** was of one going to Jerusalem."

St Luke speaks of Jesus 'setting his **face** to go to Jerusalem.' For what? For Glory. The end was not the cross of shame but the right hand of God, not death, but resurrection & ascension.

The glory which was the climax and reward of Christ's incarnate ministry had already been shown on the Mount of Transfiguration.

One aspect of the change that came over Christ then was that his **face** was seen in new light.

As we moved into this 3rd millennium Pope St John Paul II urged us to contemplate the **face** of Christ: a **face** of sorrows, and the **face** of the Risen One.

Our green time of growing in the mysteries we have celebrated in Lent and Easter this week is about the cost of discipleship: the cost of following Jesus, which is illustrated in three meetings.

The **first** man asks to be allowed to follow Jesus, who points to the total commitment necessary: Jesus doesn't even have the comforts of the wild animals.

The **second** man is called to follow but asks first to be allowed to bury his father. A difficult text for balanced interpretation. By his seeming harshness Jesus makes crystal clear where the priorities lie - discipleship comes before either personal feeling or traditional duties. The call to spread the news of the kingdom may be a more urgent call. The load of family duties can be discharged by others who have not received the powerful call.

The **third** man who wishes to follow, like Elisha responding to Elijah's call in our 1st reading, wishes first to take leave of his parents. Again the urgency of discipleship is made plain to him as Jesus stresses the need for single minded concentration on his mission. A distracted life and sloppy performance would not be worthy of God.

The strong look on the **face** of Jesus challenges the dedication of his followers. We must count the cost and give priority to God in the event of a clash of loyalties. We his pilgrim people today find ourselves on the way towards Jerusalem with the Lord.

But the march to glory, as Jesus has already warned, is the path through suffering. The disciple must expect to be treated no better than the Master. The cost of Christian discipleship is clearly stated as the journey gets underway. A new and sterner note has entered Christ's teaching.

For Jesus discipleship as ever is the Cross, the 'I' crossed out. Not my will, but yours be done Lord must always be our prayer.