



June 27, 2010 Eleventh Sunday of Ordinary Time

"No one who sets a hand to the plow and looks to what was left behind is fit for the kingdom of God." Luke 9:62

Dear Friends;

Driving on Highway 4 to Stockton after the third bridge just as you get into the city there is a billboard. The billboard shows a Marine in full dress uniform. The caption says "We are not looking for applications but for commitments." The same sentiments would apply to following Jesus.

In today's Gospel Jesus is using the image of plowing to speak of discipleship. When one is plowing a field with a team of oxen one has to pay attention to what is in front. The reins which hold the yoke guide the oxen as they move forward. If the plowman does not pay attention and looks away the oxen will wander off course, and the furrows for planting the seeds will not be straight. Plowing demands one's complete and total concentration.

To follow Jesus costs. To be a disciple means that you put Christ and his Gospel first—even before family, friends and home. We cannot dabble in discipleship nor is it a part-time job. An hour a week or a few hours volunteering is not what Jesus asks.

To follow Jesus means that I must be open to being transformed. And it is not just a matter of just avoiding evil it is also a matter of becoming something—becoming Jesus. To be a follower of Jesus means that I strive to become like him.

In the Rite of Baptism of Children there is an after-baptism anointing with chrism. The prayer accompanying the anointing says to the child that just as Jesus was anointed by God so now God anoints the newly baptized as "priest, prophet and king" so may they live as a member of Christ's body sharing in everlasting life.

What this means is that we are called, like Jesus, to offer the sacrifice of our lives; we proclaim the prophetic good news and work for the unity of the kingdom. This is our task. The mission of Jesus to proclaim the Gospel is not just the work of the ordained but is the work of the whole Church lay and ordained.

When we are baptized we become disciples. We are commissioned to be missionaries in a world that awaits a good word, a healing word and a forgiving word. It is up to us to speak that word. As Fr. Paul Philibert says "the parish is not about giving passive Christians spiritual comfort; it is rather the recruiting center for an apostolic, priestly people." Jesus is waiting; if you say yes don't look back.

This week we say goodbye to someone who certainly has not looked back on his commitment to follow Jesus. For the last several years **Deacon Frank Bustos** has been helping us with our growing Spanish speaking community. He and his wife Grace, has prepared couples for marriage. Frank has prepared parents and godparents for the baptism of their children and young women for their quinceañeras. Frank has preached regularly at the Spanish Mass and was a help in establishing the St Anne Guadalupana Society.

He is always cheerful, likes to joke, yet is humble and a man of deep faith. He has been a tremendous moral support for me. I would call him a deacon's deacon. I will miss him and I am sure our Spanish speaking community will miss him as well. We are grateful for his ministry here.

Peace,

Fr Ron