

13th SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

St. Luke 9:51-62

To say that our Lord “resolutely took the road for Jerusalem” means that He made His way purposefully towards Jerusalem, towards the place of His execution, towards the Cross. In choosing to do this He chose to follow the will of His Father, that He should suffer and die before rising in glory and ascending into heaven. Up to this time Our Lord and the Apostles had moved out into the wider world to preach the Gospel, but now the time draws near for that mission to find its fulfillment, for Our Lord to turn back to where it began, to Jerusalem. It is a choice that is seemingly a paradox, a choice for death so that it may effect life. St. Andrew of Crete wrote, “The Cross is also the glory and exaltation of Christ. It is the overflowing cup of which the psalm speaks, and the crown of all suffering that Christ endured for us... Christ Himself tells us that the Cross is His glory... He tells us that the Cross is His exaltation; ‘And when I am lifted up above the earth, I will draw all things to myself.’” In setting His face towards Jerusalem, Our Lord chose against His own self and chose for the plan of salvation of God the Father; He chose against the subjective good for the objective good. You and I must choose between what is seemingly good for us and what is good in and of itself; between the subjective good and the objective good. What makes this decision even more difficult are the times in which we live. We have grown-up amidst the so called values of equality, liberty, and tolerance, where the most important thing is our success. The problem is that the values of our culture are incomplete in of themselves, for they disregard our transcendent origins and goal. Instead we are taught that each of us has our own way of realising our identity, and that it is important to find and live out our identity rather than to conform to a model imposed by society, or our parent’s generation, or any religious authority. That is, I can choose what is true

and false so that what might be true for you may not be true for me, that faith is a matter of choice, that science and religion can never be reconciled, and that what is good and right is based on what I feel rather than on what is known.

However, we believe that there are objective truths, that there are things which are absolutely right and absolutely wrong. That God exists whether I believe in Him or not, that $2+2=4$ whether or not I say the answer is three or five. But this is where things become difficult; the turmoil between the subjective and the objective, where the struggle between what I feel to be right for me and what is absolutely right takes place. But to the faithful mind this is where you and I must set our face towards Jerusalem, towards the Holy Cross, to voluntarily choose God's plan for salvation.

We struggle between what feels right and what is right, because our inclination to sin is waging war with God's love.

There is something very interesting about the Mount of Olives, where Our Lord went the night of His arrest and the place of his agony in the garden. The geography of that place is such that where Our Lord battled His own fears for His life and His desire to do the will of His Father, that garden sits between the city of Jerusalem and the open expanse of the desert. The night before He died Our Lords stood between the place of His impending death and the chance to escape death and flee to the desert. So why did He not run?

In Christ we find the union of the subjective and the objective, the resolution of our wants and our needs, because in Christ we have He who day by day in His life chose the Father's will because He knew that in spite of what is thought or felt, in the Father's will there is ultimately life. In Christ we find the fullness of life and we find it by turning our face towards Jerusalem towards the Cross and also towards the resurrection.

God became man not so that we might drag God down to ourselves, but so that God might draw us up to Himself.