

13th Sunday in Ordinary Time

A few weeks ago I shared with you the good news that Father Michael Goode will start working here with me at St. Anthony's. He begins his work with us this Tuesday. I have more good news to share with you, this time about our building. This week we signed a lease agreement with the Don Bosco Centers. They will use our classroom space to offer English as a Second Language, employment assistance, and citizenship classes, starting on August 1. This will put our building to more use, bring more people into our neighborhood, help them improve their futures, and bring us a little more income. Over the next few weeks we'll be cleaning up the building to make room for Don Bosco, throwing out a lot of trash that has accumulated over the years. This should make our facility even more attractive and more useful. It is hard to clean house, but from time to time, it's a good idea.

The bible consistently delivers this message about being a disciple: travel light. Jesus says, foxes have dens and birds have nests, but he had nowhere to rest his head. If you want to follow him, leave everything behind, and don't look back at it. When the prophet Elisha followed the prophet Elijah, he too had to leave his family and livelihood behind. If you want to follow a master, you bring just yourself. Anything else will distract you. That is why we sang in Psalm 16 today, "You are my inheritance, O Lord." We may have inherited land from the generation before us. We may have possessions piled up on our property. But in this psalm, material things don't matter. The Lord matters. If we have received the Lord, we have all we need.

In our country we often become envious of the possessions of others. We think our lives would be happier if we could get some of what someone else has. Discipleship is different. It's not about what you possess, but whom you possess. You really don't need many things. If you possess the Lord, you have it all.

Tomorrow morning I'll be flying to England, where I'm giving some talks about to catechumenate ministers around the country. I'll also visit some friends there. I've been packing today, getting everything I need down to two suitcases. When I moved to St. Anthony's a year ago, it took a truck and several cars to move my possessions here, but I'm going to live out of suitcases for the next few weeks. It makes me wonder just how many possessions I really need.

Sometimes it takes a big event to clean house. You move to a different place, or someone else moves in. Many people find that when they do with less, they feel lighter and more focused. If you can live without some possessions for a while, you can probably live without them a while longer. Then the one possession that is more important than the rest will be left - that is the Lord.