

Monday 29 June

Today is Monday the 29 June, in the Thirteenth Week of Ordinary Time.

Ex Cathedra, directed by Jeffrey Skidmore, sing Hanaq Pachap Kusikuynin, a hymn in the Quechua language of South America, a beautiful prayer which I might make my own as I listen now: "Bliss of heaven: a thousand times I adore you. Tree of uncountable fruits. Hope of the peoples. Pillar of the weak. Listen to my prayer."

Today's reading is from the Gospel of Matthew.

Matthew 8:18-22

When Jesus saw great crowds around him, he gave orders to go over to the other side. A scribe then approached and said, "Teacher, I will follow you wherever you go." And Jesus said to him, "Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests; but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head." Another of his disciples said to him, "Lord, first let me go and bury my father." But Jesus said to him, "Follow me, and let the dead bury their own dead."

Jesus seems almost to slap down his enthusiastic followers here with tough words about the cost of discipleship. How does his reaction seem to you? Cruel? Discouraging? Realistic?

"Let the dead bury their own dead" seems a callous reply to a man who only wants to do his duty to his dead father, but what is Jesus saying here about who is really dead and who is really alive?

As the passage is read again, imagine yourself as one of these disciples, full of enthusiasm, declaring your commitment to Jesus, and hearing this less-than-encouraging reply about how hard it's going to be. Notice how that feels.

If you consider yourself a follower - a disciple - of Jesus, what has the "cost of discipleship" been for you? Perhaps you have sacrificed a great deal. Or perhaps you think you've had it too easy. Can you talk to the Lord about this, now?

Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit. As it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.