

## **Commentary on the Gospel for Wed, Nov 6th 2013**

Jesus is not telling us not to dream great dreams or not to undertake significant tasks, but he does ask us not to act in a heedless manner, no matter how altruistic our goal is or what we generously offer of ourselves in order to achieve it. We must not do only astounding things, or do them immediately, without considering the consequences and ramifications.

What Jesus is specifically trying to get across here is that following him can make heavy demands on a person and that we should consider whether we are up to these demands or not. In Luke 9:57-62 Jesus gives the same sort of warning to the one who puts his hand to the plow and looks back or the one who wants to take a lengthy leave of his father before following him. And just at the beginning of today's passage he says "If any man comes to me without hating his father, mother, wife, children, brothers, sisters, yes and his own life too, he cannot be my disciple."

And let us face the fact that total commitment is not part of our culture. We change jobs frequently, we move from one place to another rather often (and often enough across long distances), and few of us can look back at a family home that we have had for generations and can still call ours. Marriage is only temporary for too many of our brothers and sisters, and among the young, sex is so casual and uncommitted that often enough the two don't even know each other's names. Change is a constant in our lives on many levels, if not most of them.

The Lord asks us to commit ourselves to him fully, and many of us try to do so, but none of us is able to reach the absolute commitment of Mary. If we really do put ourselves out, however, as prudently and wisely as today's reading suggests, the Three Persons will each work to support us and we will win through, but we need to pay attention, to truly discern just what God is asking and how serious we are.

God is waiting for our decision, which is absolutely necessary, and if we stand in fear we need to remember that Christ also says "Come to me all you who labor and are overburdened, and I will give you rest. Shoulder my yoke and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. Yes, my yoke is easy and my burden light" (Matthew 11:29).

So what demands is he asking of me in particular? And what is my response?

Chas Kestermeier, S.J.