

Dear brothers and sisters,

This Sunday's reading focuses on God's call to us. Every one of us has a place in the Father's plan. As St John Henry Newman expressed it: 'God has created me for some definite service.' This is a prayer for us and it is a prayer for every day of our lives, for we need to remind ourselves of the wonderful fact that God, in His love, wants us to be His and to do His work.

It is clear in the Gospel that Jesus never forces anyone – he simply moves on to the Samaritan town that would welcome Him. To those who are attracted by the Lord and seek to follow, the Lord is clear about the challenges – including having no home, being single minded, and putting absolutely nothing before the Lord's work.

Elisha receives the call to be Elijah's servant and successor as prophet, and having said his goodbyes, sets off for the struggles that come with God's call to be a prophet to His people.

In a society that is, perhaps, rather wary of lifelong dedication, the way of Christ offers something different that is truly prophetic, for the way of the Christian, starting with baptism and finding expression in so many ways – notably, of course, in marriage, priesthood, religious life, and dedicated single life – speaks to the world of the love of Christ and the Kingdom of the Father.

The way of the Christian is true liberty, as St Paul points out in his letter to the Galatians. It is the way of love and service, guided at every moment by the promptings of the Holy Spirit.

As we listen to the scriptures, may we truly say with the psalmist: O Lord, it is YOU who are my portion – for this is the way to life.

With every Blessing,

+ Richard