

Homily 14th Sunday of OT July 5 2026 Year A
(1 Kings 19:19-21; Psalm 34 "Taste Deeply," R. Bruxvoort Colligan;
Romans 8:14-17; Matthew 11:28-30)

When did your life change significantly?

In 1982, I remember going to the movie "Tootsie" in Montreal with my husband I when my mother-in-law was visiting. She had agreed to take care of our newborn baby so that we could have a date, which was suggested at our prenatal classes. What happened during the movie was that I suddenly started to weep when Dustin Hoffman, dressed as a middle-aged woman and babysitting for a colleague, held up a crying infant. I had been lost in the movie's story and then suddenly with the baby like that, lifted up and the focus of attention, it struck me that my life had dramatically changed, and I reacted physically, with tears. My spirit, with the Holy Spirit, was speaking through those tears. I was a mother and forever changed by that first pregnancy and childbirth.

In the first reading, Elisha's life changes dramatically and forever when he receives, from Elijah, the call to take a new path. What the weight of the cloak, likely a sheepskin, thrown over his shoulders meant, was that he had been called out of one way of living, into a radically different way of life. The symbol of the cloak was like a holy or divine passing of the torch from Elijah to Elisha. He had to let go of the plough and begin life as a nomadic prophet.

But not before saying good-bye to his family. I was touched by Elisha's desire and request to inform his parents of this major shift in his life and to kiss them good-bye. Equally, I was touched by Elijah's understanding and his permission for the younger man to go back home first.

The other gesture Elisha makes before he leaves is to take everything he owns, the wooden equipment and oxen and give it to the people as a cooking fire and food to share. Several people will be unemployed after he leaves, as there were twelve oxen, but he makes sure those workers are well fed. Twelve oxen would have been a memorable feast and a story to tell for generations to come.

The Elijah/Elisha relationship features a special bond because of the nature of prophecy. Not long before this scene, Elijah was given the instruction from Yhwh to find Elisha and to train him. Their bond would become like the closeness of a child and her parent, in body and in spirit. Children learn through observing and living with their family members. Elijah and Elisha walked together from then on.

Paul tells us in Romans that our relationship with the Spirit is that we are her sons and daughters and Jesus is our brother. This bond is brought about and sanctioned by the voice of the Spirit. *She* tells us we are children of Creator, Paul says. We will suffer as Jesus suffered and we will be glorified or experience a oneness with God's love, the way Jesus did.

Sharing the Spirit makes us part of the family. In the best-case scenario, we share the gifts of the Spirit with the world—whether wonder or wisdom, courage or our conscience, knowledge or reverence or right judgment—these manifestations of the Spirit are woven into our life experience. And when we use them, or receive them, our lives can change dramatically.

Today's gospel, too, makes that message of intimacy with God's love very clear. Jesus walks with us, shares in our pain, bears our burdens. There can be an intimacy and a trusting relationship in our bond with the resurrected Jesus. What we experience either in prayer or in

the everyday events of life, being a Christian is about sharing the Creator's love through Jesus's Spirit.

So much of God's love is visible in the changes to our lives whether through the birth of a child, the loss of a job, a move to a different town or meeting a mentor who figuratively throws a cloak over our shoulders.

Psalm 34 invites us to taste and see how delicious such a relationship with Christ Sophia can be and to take note of how change comes about in our lives.

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