"No one who sets a hand to the plow and looks to what was left behind is fit for the Kingdom of God."

These are strong challenging words spoken by Jesus to each one of us.

When I was ordained 60 years ago I wondered "Can I do this the rest of my life?" What was it like for you when you made your marriage vows, i.e., ,,, I will love you and honor you all the days of my life"? What was it like when you made some other serious lifelong commitment? Did you wonder? Were you frightened?

Jesus in today's Gospel is setting out on his final journey to Jerusalem. He knows where He is going. He knows what is going to happen. He doesn't back down. Again and again He tells His disciples He is going up to Jerusalem, where He will be mocked and scourged and crucified. Jesus did not look back. In the Garden of Gethsemane Jesus prayed, " …Father…Take this cup of suffering away from me, but not what I will but what You will." From the cross He cried out, "Father into your hands I commend my Spirit." Jesus did not look back. He abandoned Himself to the will of the Father.

When you were baptized, you were consecrated to God. In Holy Communion and Confirmation this consecration went deeper. And in marriage you are committed deeply to you spouse. Jesus tell us "No one who sets a hand to the plow and looks to what was left behind is fit for the kingdom of the Lord."

Jesus calls us to surrender our lives to God. This is an extremely strong calling. We will not do this perfectly. But God is not all demand. Remember the many times Jesus forgave people in the Gospel. As the soldiers pounded the nails into His hands and feet He cried out to His Father "…forgive them they don't know what they are doing."

He spoke to the woman caught in adultery. "Has no one condemned you? Neither will I." He forgave St. Peter his three denials.

Jesus calls us to surrender our entire lives to God. That is our Christian vocation. Jesus is full of forgiveness and love and compassion. So let each of us, once again, set our hands to the plow.