

# Archbishop Smith: Amber Alert

I really appreciate how this system works. Very recently an amber alert cut into radio programming I was listening to in the car. Its purpose was to advise everyone that a child had gone missing. It came as an urgent call to everyone to cooperate with civic officials to find and rescue the child. The hope was that everyone's senses would be heightened to be on the lookout. With great relief we learned that the child was found safe not long after the alert had been issued.

What I want to draw out from this example is the determined focusing of attention in securing the safety of the child. Nothing else mattered; no priority surpassed it.

On Sunday we heard from the Gospel passage (Luke 9:51-62) how Jesus "set his face to go to Jerusalem". The expression means that nothing else mattered; there was no higher priority. He had received from his Father in Heaven the mission to rescue the lost children of God and bring them "home" safely to the Father's embrace, and he was determined to carry it out. Jerusalem was the place where he would fulfill this mission of reconciliation by his death and resurrection. Therefore, he "set his face"; he was focused and resolute.

Along the way, some people offered to follow him. His replies made clear that participation in his mission required the same focus and determination. For the authentic disciple of Jesus Christ, no desire or attachment can be allowed to take precedence over the demands of the Gospel. It is the one focus determinative of all aspects of our lives.

Here we have an invitation to examine our plans, priorities, loyalties and attachments. Do we give to them a higher priority than the demands of discipleship? Am I ready to respond with full attention and resolute action when the "regular programming" of my daily life is "interrupted" by the urgent call of the Gospel?

May God grant us the grace to hear and recognize the alert and to respond with faith and resolution.