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Following

"You cannot be a leader,
and ask other people to follow you,
unless you know how to follow too."

Sam Rayburn

The Leadership of Speaker Sam Rayburn,
Collected Tributes of His Congressional Colleagues

Lessons from looking after my daughter's dogs, Part 2 … To allow my daughter to attend a weekly choir rehearsal, she drops her two dogs off at my house and I have them for the evening. My wife sings in the same choir, so it's just me and three dogs (mine and the two visitors) in the house together. The dogs aren't any bother. They get on well, and most of the time they're asleep by the fire or on a sofa. But the truth is, my daughter's two dogs merely tolerate me until their proper "mummy" comes back. So every time I move, they move too. I go into the kitchen, they follow me. I use the toilet, they follow me. I fetch something from my study, they follow me upstairs. I go back to the sitting room, they follow me down again. Where I go, they go. Attached to *me*? Not a bit of it. They just think that each time I move it must be because mummy's come back.

To be honest, it feels good having this canine entourage following me everywhere. Perhaps I could be the Pied Piper of dogs, and believe I have an aura about me that compels them to follow. Ah well …

The truth is, we like to have followers, even in the simplest of ways: the child who does what they're told, because we say so; the committee that bends to our will, swayed by our argument; the parishioner who comes back to church because our sermon was so compelling the first time; the audience that swells because they know who the guest speaker is. Come on! Be honest. We like to be followed, don't we?

But that's when we need to hear the advice of Speaker Sam Ryan. If we want people to follow us, then we must also learn to be followers: to follow the good example of our role-models; to follow principles that have proven to be effective; to follow the guidance of Jesus, the lives of the Saints, the exemplars we most admire. "Unless you know how to follow …"

A prayer for today

"Follow, follow", the old chorus runs.
If I follow what's right, people might follow what's right in me.
Goodness! I'd better get that right! Amen

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