

Sunday, June 28, 2026 – Thirteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time Year A

First Reading - 2 Kings 4:8-11. 14-16

A reading from the second book of the Kings

That is the holy man of God, let him remain there.

One day as Elisha was on his way to Shunem, a woman of rank who lived there pressed him to stay and eat there. After this he always broke his journey for a meal when he passed that way. She said to her husband, 'Look, I am sure the man who is constantly passing our way must be a holy man of God. Let us build him a small room on the roof, and put him a bed in it, and a table and chair and lamp; whenever he comes to us he can rest there.'

One day when he came, he retired to the upper room and lay down. 'What can be done for her?' he asked. Gehazi (his servant) answered, 'Well, she has no son and her husband is old.' Elisha said, 'Call her.' The servant called her and she stood at the door. 'This time next year,' Elisha said 'you will hold a son in your arms.'

Responsorial Psalm

Ps 88:2-3. 16-19. R. v.2

(R.) Forever I will sing the goodness of the Lord.

Second Reading - Romans 6:3-4. 8-11

A reading from the letter of St Paul to the Romans

Having been buried with him through baptism, we shall walk in a new life.

When we were baptised in Christ Jesus we were baptised in his death; in other words, when we were baptised we went into the tomb with him and joined him in death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead by the Father's glory, we too might live a new life.

But we believe that having died with Christ we shall return to life with him: Christ, as we know, having been raised from the dead will never die again. Death has no power over him any more. When he died, he died, once for all, to sin, so his life now is life with God; and in that way, you too must consider yourselves to be dead to sin but alive for God in Christ Jesus.

Gospel Acclamation

1 Peter 2:9

Alleluia, alleluia!

You are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy people.

Praise God who called you out of darkness and into his marvellous light.

Alleluia!

Gospel - Matthew 10:37-42

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Matthew

Anyone who does not accept his cross is not worthy of me. Anyone who welcomes you, welcomes me.

Jesus instructed the Twelve as follows: 'Anyone who prefers father or mother to me is not worthy of me. Anyone who prefers son or daughter to me is not worthy of me. Anyone who does not take his cross and follow in my footsteps is not worthy of me. Anyone who finds his life will lose it; anyone who loses his life for my sake will find it.

'Anyone who welcomes you welcomes me; and those who welcome me welcome the one who sent me.

'Anyone who welcomes a prophet because he is a prophet will have a prophet's reward; and anyone who welcomes a holy man because he is a holy man will have a holy man's reward.

'If anyone gives so much as a cup of cold water to one of these little ones because he is a disciple, then I tell you solemnly, he will most certainly not lose his reward.'

Welcoming the Stranger
Reflection on the Gospel-13th Sunday in Ordinary Time A
(Matthew 10:37-42)
Veronica Lawson RSM

Today's gospel reading concludes the so-called Matthean missionary discourse in which Jesus instructs his disciples on what it means to be a disciple. While some of the nuances of those instructions are lost in translation, Jesus' words to the disciples can still speak to contemporary disciples. What price are we prepared to pay to create a just, equitable and healthy planetary community? That question is at the heart of today's gospel reading. That was, in essence, the question that Jesus of Nazareth put to his disciples and the question that Matthew put to his community some fifty or sixty years after Jesus' death.

We seem to be at a turning point in world history, with a climate crisis, a pandemic earlier this decade that claimed the lives of some 6.8 million people worldwide (statista.com), a growing consciousness of the discrimination experienced by people of colour and a plethora of mindless wars. What price are we prepared to pay to change the way we live so that the lives of those hitherto discounted might matter to everyone without exception? What price are we prepared to pay that we might meet the needs of all within the means of the planet? We have the witness of countless health professionals who have died from diseases contracted from their patients. We have the witness of parents who have one meagre meal per day so that their children might be sheltered and nourished. There are courageous people across the globe taking up their respective "crosses" and laying down their lives for suffering others.

In following the way of Jesus and living the gospel of truth and justice and compassion, we can be faced with excruciating choices. We cannot always satisfy family if we want to be true to what we believe or if we want to expose injustice and dishonesty: there is often a deeper commitment that transcends the bonds of family relationship. We may even be called to relinquish, for the sake of a greater good, work that we love or income on which we depend. In other words, there is deep suffering in the way of discipleship, suffering that comes from being true to a mission that brings life to others despite the cost to ourselves.

Taking up the cross is a powerful metaphor for being willing to endure whatever hardships are involved in realising the vision of God's empire as opposed to the brutal empire of "Rome". God's empire finds expression in our times in every attempt to enshrine just policies and practices in law. It finds

expression in every attempt to free the most marginalised from the impact of unjust policies and practices. Words are not enough: we are to live out in our lives the pattern of Jesus' life, a life characterised by hospitality and attention to the vulnerable. A cup of cold water for "the little ones" becomes the emblem of discipleship and, in our post-industrial times, the little ones include all God's thirsty creatures, human and other-than-human..