

CELEBRATE SABBATH

Thirteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time

Silence, solitude and stillness as prerequisites for finding peace and serenity.

2 Kings 4:8-11, 14-16

The woman of Shunem recognized Elisha as a “Holy man of God” and offered him hospitality. Hospitality is not only a virtue but also a sacred duty. This excerpt tells us that the woman was blessed with the gift of a child as a reward for her hospitality.

Psalm 89

Psalm 89 forms a doxology, a liturgical formula of praise as a fitting conclusion to the third book of the Psalms. The whole psalm expresses the miracle of God’s Love for His people. The author has discovered God as “steadfast Love” and he must now teach what he has discovered to the young people in his charge and urge them to tell their children and children’s children. God fulfills His promises because he is steadfast love.

**I will sing of your mercy forever, LORD
proclaim your faithfulness through all ages.
For I said, “My mercy is established forever;
my faithfulness will stand as long as the heavens.**

Romans 6:3-4, 8-11

In his letter to the Romans, Paul has been expounding on God’s gracious gift of justification through Grace and by faith. In chapter six, he began to explore the theme of “sanctification”. Those who are justified by God through baptism into Christ are thereby empowered and called to live a holy or sanctified life. In this excerpt, Paul reminds his readers that they were baptized (immersed, incorporated) into the death as well as into the life of Jesus. The immersion into death is a death to the old self and a death to sin. Just as death has no power over Christ, sin has no power over the believer. The baptized believer lives by the power of grace..... lives a sanctified life.

Mathew 10:37-42

In chapter ten, Mathew gives us a good and detailed record of the instruction Jesus gave his disciples as he prepared them for their work in the service of the Gospel. He told them what was expected of them and what it would cost them. He told them that they

would have to struggle and make sacrifices as they respond to his call to service. Following him would cost them a lot. He also assured them that God's care, protection and love would follow them on their journey.

In this excerpt Jesus spoke about those whom the disciples were sent to serve. God sent Jesus; Jesus sent his disciples; whoever welcomes the disciples sent by Jesus welcomes Jesus and God and whoever refuses the disciples refuses Jesus and God. It is a holy thing to welcome messengers of God...welcoming messengers of God is in fact welcoming God himself. The Jews believed that to receive a person's messenger was the same as to receive the person himself. To pay respect to ambassador was the same to pay respect to the king who had sent him. To honor a man of God or a messenger of God was to honor the God who sent him.

We can not all be preachers, teachers, prophets and priests. We can not all proclaim God's word or give a great sermon or write spiritual books. But we can all be hospitable, give a simple welcome to men and women of God, to those who are involved in proclaiming God and God's ways.

In this excerpt Jesus tells us that those who offer the simple gift of hospitality to God's messengers will receive no less a reward than the messengers themselves. Hospitality was one of the central virtues in Judeo-Christian traditions. Remember Abraham's hospitality to strangers who brought him the gift he was waiting for: good news about the birth of his son. Remember the story of Jesus in the house of Martha and Mary. Hospitality is at the heart of the Christian message.

Be hospitable. Hospitality is not only a virtue but also a sacred duty.

Saint of the Day, June 28 - St. Irenaeus and 13 other saints are remembered this day.

Irenaeus was a Greek from Smyrna in Asia Minor, born during the first half of the 2nd century, probably between the years 120 and 140. Unlike many of his contemporaries, he was brought up in a Christian family rather than converting as an adult.

During the persecution of Marcus Aurelius, the Roman Emperor from 161–180, Irenaeus was a priest of the Church of Lyon. The clergy of that city, many of whom were suffering imprisonment for the faith, sent him in 177 to Rome with a letter to Pope Eleutherius concerning the heresy of Montanism. While Irenaeus was in Rome, a persecution took place in Lyon. Returning to Gaul, Irenaeus succeeded the martyr Saint Pothinus and became the second bishop of Lyon.

During the religious peace which followed the persecution of Marcus Aurelius, the new bishop divided his activities between the duties of a pastor and of a missionary. Almost

all his writings were directed against Gnosticism. The most famous of these writings is *Adversus haereses* (Against Heresies). Irenaeus alludes to coming across Gnostic writings, and holding conversations with Gnostics, and this may have taken place in Asia Minor or in Rome.

The Church is fortunate that Irenaeus was involved in many of its controversies in the second century. He was a student, well trained, no doubt, with great patience in investigating, tremendously protective of apostolic teaching. Instead of proving his opponents wrong, he tried to win them by providing greater understanding. He maintained a very positive attitude toward all and called everyone to praise God by being good and doing good: "The glory of God is man fully alive", he says. The circumstances and details about his death, like those of his birth and early life in Asia Minor, are not at all clear.

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