



## Christ in Our Neighborhood

## Baptized in the Lord

### Prayer

Lord, through the grace of adoption, chose us to be children of light that we may not be wrapped in the darkness of error, but always be seen to stand in the bright light of truth. Amen

### Commentary

#### 1st Reading: 2 Kings 4:8-11, 16-16A

The story of the Prophet Elisha and the Woman of Shunem may not be a familiar one, but it's worth reading the entire story. (2 Kings 4:8-37, 8:1-6).

Elisha and his servant Gehazi knew her well as they would dine with her whenever they passed by that way. But then her hospitality is greatly extended when she recognizes that Elisha is a "holy man of God." Her hospitality is rewarded greatly. God, through Elisha's intercession, blesses her and her husband with a child. She had been barren until then.

There are times when we are determined to do something for another as selflessly as we can without any thought of a reward in return. But, before starting we weigh how much time it will take, how hard it will be, or how much it will cost.

If we are determined to act charitably, we find that God rewards us ten-fold in grace and joy.

### Questions

- Recall a time that you went out of your way to help another person only to be unexpectedly rewarded in return. How was that for you?

### Commentary

#### 2nd Reading: Romans 6:3-4, 8-11

St. Paul reminds us that Jesus died to sin once and for all, and as to his life, he lives for God. And, we who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death so that we might have newness of life.

He said we must think of ourselves as dead to sin and living for God in Christ Jesus. Having received the newness of life in baptism, we are to live as children of God so as to bring our souls unstained by sin into God's presence.

A bishop once asked those preparing for the Easter Sacraments, "What is it you need to leave behind, because to follow Jesus means you can't take it with you?"

We continually discern this question as we try to rid ourselves of the things that keep us from being in loving communion with God and neighbor.

We seek forgiveness and strive to not sin again. Sometimes we fail and sometimes it feels like an unending cycle of sin and reconciliation. But, we don't give up. It's in our striving to do good and avoiding sin that we are slowly being molded into the image and likeness of God.

### Question

- What does St. Paul mean when he says, "We must think of ourselves as dead to sin and living for God in Christ Jesus?"
- What does it mean to know and to follow Jesus?

Christ in Our Neighborhood is the evangelization program of the Diocese of Phoenix.

## 13th Sunday in Ordinary Time

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## Commentary

### Gospel: Matthew 10:37-42

St. Paul said in his letter to the Hebrews, “Do not neglect hospitality, for through it some have unknowingly entertained angels.”

You may have heard this and applied it in your hospitality toward strangers. But, this also applies to you... sometimes that angel (messenger) of God is you.

As baptized and anointed disciples Jesus sends us to be his messenger by proclaiming him to others.

When we set out to bring Jesus to others, those who recognize him in us receive him and those who receive him will receive his reward.

But to be a disciple of Jesus, our hearts need to be in the right place. Jesus said, “Whoever loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me, and whoever loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me.”

We know that he is not saying that we should not love our family. Instead, he is telling us that to love others wholly and selflessly we need to place God first. Because, to love another wholly and selflessly means being willing to pick up and carry a cross. It means to be willing to give up your life for another.

When our hearts are fixed on God first, our words and actions flow from the love of God.

## Question

- Are there things you place above God in your life?
- What difference would it make if you placed God above all else in your life?

## This Week's Task

- Do one selfless loving act for someone you don't know just for your love of God

## Group Prayer

*The leader invites the group to pray the following words together.*

Lord Jesus, though baptism and our belief in the Holy Trinity, help us to conquer the fear that keeps us from acknowledging you to others.

Grant that we ourselves, being constant in mutual love and striving to understand more fully the mystery of your life, may be made more perfect witnesses to your love in the world. Amen

## Psalm

*The leader will guide the group in praying Psalm 89*

**Psalm Response: Forever I will sing the goodness of the Lord.**

The promises of the LORD I will sing forever,  
through all generations  
my mouth shall proclaim your faithfulness.  
For you have said, “My kindness is established forever;”  
in heaven you have confirmed your faithfulness.

**R. Forever I will sing the goodness of the Lord.**

Blessed the people who know the joyful shout;  
in the light of your countenance, O LORD, they walk.  
At your name they rejoice all the day,  
and through your justice they are exalted.

**R. Forever I will sing the goodness of the Lord.**

You are the splendor of their strength,  
and by your favor our horn is exalted.  
For to the LORD belongs our shield,  
and the Holy One of Israel, our king.

**R. Forever I will sing the goodness of the Lord.**

**Conclude with an Our Father**