



## Christ in Our Neighborhood

### Prayer

Grant, almighty God, that we may always embrace our baptismal anointing as priest, prophet and king to share your love and mercy with everyone we meet. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, Your son, Amen.

### Commentary

#### 1st Reading: Exodus 19:2-6

It had been only three months since the Israelites fled Egypt. In that short time, they witnessed the parting of the Red Sea, manna from heaven, and water gush forth from solid rock. Now they were at the foot of Mt Sinai. And here God made a most astonishing offer: “if you obey me completely and keep my covenant ... you shall be a kingdom of priests.”

If they would be true to Him, God would send them as royal priests to minister to the world of the saving power of the one and only God. What was once just a band of former slaves would be royal priests, empowered just as Adam had been empowered.

Sadly, we know that those encamped at Mt Sinai did not take God up on that offer. A short while later, they were worshipping a golden calf. Yet God did not give up on His people; He would make His astonishing offer again, many years later.

### Question

- Are there times when I have turned to the golden calves of our times?
- How have I lived out my royal priesthood that was bestowed on me at baptism?

### Commentary

#### 2nd Reading: Romans 5:6-11

In this reading, St. Paul shows us how God offers us His love and mercy. As Paul put it: “while we were still sinners Christ died for us ... Indeed, if, while we were enemies, we were reconciled to God through the death of his Son, how much more, once reconciled, will we be saved by his life.”

## 11th Sunday Ordinary Time

At our baptism, each of us became part of God’s flock and were sent as a royal priest to minister to the world of the saving power of the one and only God. The anointing we received as “priest, prophet and king” was not conditional. There was no: If you obey me completely and keep my covenant, as there had been at Mt. Sinai. Accepting baptism was enough – we were sent as royal priests and prophets of the good news of Jesus Christ.

As a result of God’s boundless love, we have been justified, saved and reconciled with God. So, even the golden calves of our times cannot block us in our God-given mission in the world, (but they can certainly confuse and delay us).

### Question

Have I do I show my gratitude to God that He loves me unconditionally? How do I bring the Good News of God's love and mercy to others?

## Commentary

### Gospel: Matthew 9:36- 10:8

In this Gospel passage, Jesus observed that the people were like sheep in need of a shepherd. They were still God's flock, but their shepherds were failing them. So, Jesus appointed 12 new shepherds representing the 12 tribes that had been gathered at Mt. Sinai centuries earlier.

They were to be royal priests with authority over unclean spirits and were sent to the lost sheep of the house of Israel, harkening back to that fateful time at the foot of Mt Sinai when God's people ignored His astonishing offer. Their role was to go among the lost sheep and heal, not admonish or chastise. God's supreme gift of love and mercy was near at hand. It was only after Israel continued to reject Jesus that the mission of the 12 became ministering to all mankind.

There is a theme that runs through this Sunday's readings that speaks of God's boundless love and mercy. In sweeping and profound ways, God has expressed His desire that those He blesses will be His ministers to a world that "knows him not" – a world in need of the good news of the saving power of the one and only God. At first, God turned to those encamped at Mt. Sinai; then He turned to the 12; and now He turns to all the baptized. We now refer to the twelve as "Apostles," because the word, apostle, means "one who is sent." But we must bear in mind that following the institution of the sacrament of baptism, each and every baptized person is an apostle, that is, one who is sent.

## Question

Am I aware that I have been sent as part in God's plan for the salvation of all mankind?

What is my part in that plan?

## This Week's Task

Reflect upon God's mercy in your life and find one way to share His mercy with another person this week.

## Group Prayer

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

O, Jesus, Good and Gentle Shepherd, fill our hearts with love for You and for all people. Give us the sincere desire to share Your love and compassion with every person we encounter, especially those whom we find difficult.

Lord, You are good and faithful to all who call upon You. We ask You to fill our hearts with Your unending peace so that we may share that peace in every situation we face this week. We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

## Psalm

The leader will guide the group in praying Psalm 100 (from the 11th Sunday of Ordinary Time).

**Psalm Response: We are his people: the sheep of his flock.**

Sing joyfully to the LORD, all you lands;  
serve the LORD with gladness;  
come before him with joyful song.

**R. We are his people: the sheep of his flock.**

Know that the LORD is God;  
he made us, his we are;  
his people, the flock he tends.

**R. We are his people: the sheep of his flock.**

The LORD is good:  
his kindness endures forever,  
and his faithfulness to all generations.

**R. We are his people: the sheep of his flock.**

**Conclude with an Our Father**