

ELEVENTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

Year C
June 13, 2010

2 Samuel 12:7-10, 13
Galatians 2:16, 19-21
Luke 7:36-8:3

GATHERING

(An unlit candle, a clear glass pitcher of water, an empty clear glass bowl and a couple of towels rest on a cloth-covered table in the gathering place.)

OPENING PRAYER

(The candle is lit. The leader invites members to some time of silent attention to the presence of God with them. After some minutes of silence, the prayer continues as follows.)

All: Lord, forgive the wrong I have done.

Leader: Blessed is the one whose fault is taken away,
whose sin is covered.
Blessed the man to whom the LORD imputes not guilt,
in whose spirit there is no guile.

All: Lord, forgive the wrong I have done.

Leader: I acknowledged my sin to you,
my guilt I covered not.
I said, "I confess my faults to the LORD,"
and you took away the guilt of my sin.

All: Lord, forgive the wrong I have done.

Leader: You are my shelter; from distress you will preserve me;
with glad cries of freedom you will ring me round.

All: Lord, forgive the wrong I have done.

Leader: Be glad in the LORD and rejoice, you just;
exult, all you upright of heart.

All: Lord, forgive the wrong I have done.

Psalm 32:1-2, 5, 7, 11

(A selection of instrumental music is played.)

COMMENTARY

Our readings contain two stories of sin and sinners. In the first, the sinner, a powerful man, is confronted by a prophet. In the second, the sinner, a woman with no real power, pours out her love to Jesus. Both stories have the same ending – forgiveness – total and complete forgiveness!

That is the beauty of God! There are no recriminations when we sin and are forgiven. God always tries to rehabilitate and not to punish. Punishment destroys. God wants us all to be made whole and to experience peace in our hearts and harmony with others and with him. This is what God's graciousness is all about.

That is the point that Paul makes in the second reading: "We are not justified by works of the law but through faith in Jesus Christ." Faith is an act of love and total trust. There are those who speak of the faith as if it is merely a list of doctrines to be held. Such folk sometimes fail to speak also of love. We cannot see our God. We know him now only, as Paul says, "through a glass darkly." But, stories like that about the sinful woman helps us take a leap of trust and to surrender ourselves totally to God's care and love.

In faith, then, we approach God for forgiveness in the Sacrament of Reconciliation. Our action shows that we trust God. We surrender our prideful selves to him in the sacrament when we say, "God, I'm sorry. Please forgive me. Help me never to do that again." Telling someone else gets our sins out in the open so that they can be healed without

mincing words. Better yet, the grace that we receive in the Sacrament of Reconciliation helps us to avoid sin in the future. Never underestimate the power of the grace of God! Our God is a forgiving God.

FAITH SHARING AND INTEGRATION

- ◆ When have you behaved as if you felt you had to *earn* God's love?
- ◆ How do you experience yourself caught or infected by the dark things at work in the world around us today?
- ◆ How have you experienced the graciousness of God in your life these days?
- ◆ What feelings do you have about the Sacrament of Reconciliation? What place does it have in your life?

When has the humility of someone who has acknowledged behaving badly softened your heart?

RESPONSE IN ACTION

Examine your conscience over the next few days and then celebrate the Sacrament of Reconciliation. You might even invite a family member or friend to join you.

- ◆ Encourage someone you know who has stopped going to Mass to come with you next weekend.

Explore the possibility of writing to someone in prison. In Connecticut, contact Fr. Tony Bruno (Director of Religious Services, Connecticut Department of Corrections) at (860-692-7577) for guidance and leads or go to www.ct.gov/doc/site under organizations to find out more information.

SENDING FORTH AND CLOSING PRAYER

(The leader invites the community to a time of quiet. After a minute of silence, the gospel for the week is re-read by a member of the community. Following the reading, the leader poses this question to the community: "What does Christ say to you/us in your hearing this gospel today?"

The community pauses for a full five to seven minutes of prayerful attention to how Christ speaks to them in this gospel. After this time of silence, the leader invites members simply to mention a word or two or a brief thought that captures what they hear Christ saying to them. When this sharing is complete, some instrumental music is played. When the music is complete, the leader takes up the pitcher of water and prays as follows.)

Leader: Lord Jesus, the sinful woman washed your feet with tears. At the last meal you had with your disciples, you washed their feet as a sign of the service that we should give to others. Help us to follow in your footsteps.

All: Amen.

(The leader invites someone to have his/her hands washed. Pouring water on the person's hands, the leader says to the person, "God loves you." The rest of the community responds, "Amen." The person whose hands were washed then invites another to have his/her hands washed and so on until all have been invited. The leader then concludes as follows.)

Leader: Sisters, brothers, your faith has saved you; go in peace.

All: Thanks be to God.

