

TENTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

Year C

1 Kings 17:17-24
Psalm 30:2, 4, 5-6, 11, 12, 13
Galatians 1:11-19
Luke 7:11-17

Gathering

(An unlit candle and a Bible rest on a table in the gathering place. As members arrive, they place on the table pictures they may have brought with them of loved ones who have died.)

Prayer

(The leader invites the community to a time of silent prayer. After a time of quiet the candle is lit and the community prays as follows.)

Leader: Sisters/Brothers, see, we are alive.

I: For those who struggle with loss each day...

All: O Lord, our God, let the breath of life return to us.

II: For those who have lost what matters most to them...

All: O Lord, our God, let the breath of life return to us.

III: For those who have lost hope...

All: O Lord, our God, let the breath of life return to us.

IV: For those who suffer depression, anxiety and fear...

All: O Lord, my God, let the breath of life return to us.

Leader: Sisters/Brothers, see, we are alive.

HEARING THE LORD'S GOSPEL

(The scriptures are proclaimed aloud with a pause after each reading. Following a pause after the proclamation of the gospel, the leader invites members to name a word or phrase from the gospel that stays with them, but without any additional comment. Some may repeat what another has already said.)

When this naming is complete, the leader passes out copies of the scriptures of the week as needed. Pausing between them, the leader then poses these two questions: "What draws you to this gospel?" "Where do you resist this gospel?" The community pauses for a time of silent reflection. After about a minute, the leader invites members to consider the Reflection and Questions for the week. After a time for silent reflection, the leader invites members to re-arrange themselves in groups of three or four for sharing. The small groups move off so as not to intrude on one another.)

Reflection

In the first reading we hear Elijah say to the child's mother, "See, your son is alive." These are words that every parent who has lost a child desperately wants to hear. It is the miracle that they all pray for and for some do not receive. These are difficult readings for me to pray with. This month is the anniversary of my nephew's death. He would have been thirty four years old.

I will never forget the phone call from my mother, telling me to come to the hospital quickly. Steven, my beautiful red haired, blue eyed two year old nephew was in intensive care. It was a long weekend vigil, filled with agonizing fear, brief moments of hope and then deep sadness, especially for my sister.

This week's scriptures highlight the prophetic role of their main character. In the case of Jesus, Luke is echoing his Nazareth story in which Jesus' prophetic anointing is announced in the reading from Isaiah: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me..." The Nain story culminates in exclaiming the "great prophet" in whom "God has visited his people."

We know that in the time of Elijah and of Jesus, women without a husband who experienced the loss of an only son were particularly vulnerable. They lost not only a source of joy and comfort but their basic security. This would have been true for both of these women had not Elijah and Jesus intervened.

Loss and sorrow are real. But Jesus is *still* “moved with pity.” He is God with us. Life does go on in spite of the pain. Our God is a God of Life and Light and we can be witnesses to Jesus’ compassion simply by our presence to another. We can do this by sitting close while someone cries, praying together, sharing meals, encouraging and coaxing life to begin again. Perhaps our support to someone who has experienced great loss can be the *miracle* that helps the other find a way to new life. In our presence to each other *God visits his people now.*

Questions for Reflection and Conversation

- ◆ How have you experienced the *miraculous* in your life or that of another?
- ◆ How have you been present to another suffering a deep loss?
- ◆ How has God *visited* you through the compassion of another?
- ◆ How have you found hope at a time when you experienced a loss?

HEARING THE GOSPEL’S LORD

(After about fifteen minutes of sharing in threes/fours, the leader re-gathers the community. Once back together, members pause for a moment. The leader then poses these questions: “What do you want to hold on to for yourself from this session?” “How are you/we being called to live in response to God’s word?” After a pause, the leader invites the community to a time of conversation. When this sharing is complete, the community moves to a time of prayer.)

Response in Action Suggestions

- ◆ Explore the possibility of bringing some training for bereavement ministry to your parish. .
- ◆ Offer to serve as a volunteer at a Hospice near you (www.hospice.com/volunteer).
- ◆ Support organizations such as Saint Jude’s Hospital or Ronald McDonald House that provide comfort for families that have lost children.

Prayer

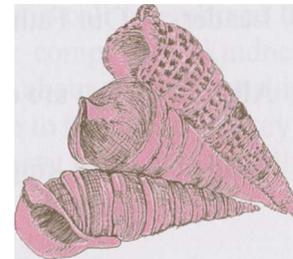
(After a brief pause, the gospel or a portion of it, either of the other readings

as appropriate or the responsorial psalm are proclaimed. The idea is to select a text that lends itself to inviting members to the time of silent prayer that follows. Following the proclamation, the leader poses these questions to the members: “What does Christ in his Spirit say to you now?” “What do you say to him in response?” The community pauses for a full five minutes of prayerful attention to God. A brief instrumental selection may be played during part of this time. After this time of silence, the leader invites members simply to mention a word or two, or a brief expression that captures what they hear Christ saying to them personally. The community receives this without additional comment.

Following this sharing, the community prays as follows.)

Make Me Brave for Life

- I: God, make me brave for life: oh, braver than this.
Let me straighten after pain, as a tree straightens after the rain,
Shining and lovely again.
- II: God, make me brave for life; much braver than this.
As the blown grass lifts, let me rise
From sorrow with quiet eyes,
Knowing Thy way is wise.
- III: God, make me brave, life brings
Such blinding things.
Help me to keep my sight;
Help me to see aright
That out of dark comes light.



Author Unknown

(Members offers petitions of remembrance and thanksgiving for deceased family and friends. The leader or a member of the community offers some collecting words of closing prayer on behalf of all. The session concludes with the exchange of a sign of peace.)