

THIRTEENTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

CYCLE A

2 King 4:8-11,14-16a

Romans 6:3-4,8-11

Matthew 10:37-42

(An incense burner and an open bible rest on a table in the center of the community.)

OPENING PRAYER

(When the community has assembled, the incense is lit. Members lift their hearts to God for several minutes in silence. After a time of quiet, members join in singing the Internet song, "All Hail, Adored Trinity,")

Leader: We are gathered as a holy community. The first holy community is the one from which we take our lead – The Holy Trinity. Let us ask the Trinity – Father, Son and Holy Spirit – to be with us with all their power. *(Pause.)*

Leader: Father, you begot the Son. Help us to give life and hope to those around us.

All: Let us be a community in union with the Trinity.

Leader: Jesus, your love for the Father is the example we are called to follow in this world.

All: Let us be a community in union with the Trinity.

Leader: Holy Spirit, you are the bond that unites Father and Son. We invite you into our hearts to be the bond between the members of Christ's Body.

All: Let us be a community in union with the Trinity.

Leader: Holy Trinity, paradigm of community, make us community in your image.

All: Amen.

COMMENTARY

Elisha and the woman of influence who invited him to dinner were held together by a special bond. It was not yet the bond that binds us together as church today, but she receives God's prophet into her life, her family. She offered him food and a place to stay while he was on his travels. He ended up offering her the one thing that could complete the life of her and her husband; the promise of a child. She reached out to him. He reached out to her. They hold fast in community in the midst of God's people.

Where are we in the body of Christ? We call the church a community, but what does that mean to us? We are "baptized *into* Christ Jesus," Paul reminds us. We are a people "living for God *in* Christ Jesus." Attachment in the body of Christ is meant to be tight, like that between pieces of velcro. It is about latching onto and being latched onto... Do our bonds in community, in parish, even approach that kind of connection to one another these days? What do we make of the decline in parish attendance in these past years? Many come to receive; how many come to give? We must deepen our sense of belonging – to one another. We need to be a people who *stick together* in Christ Jesus.

FAITH SHARING AND INTEGRATION

- ◆ Can you see community in your worshipping congregation? What enables it or what prevents it?
- ◆ How tight is the connection among members of your community/parish these days?
- ◆ What can we do to deepen the bond among members of our community/parish?
- ◆ How well balanced is the receiving and giving among members of your parish these days?

RESPONSE IN ACTION

- ◆ The next time that you are involved in a parish activity, invite someone who is not much involved to join you in service.

- ◆ Attend a parish council meeting. Enter into conversation with these parish leaders about the common good of the parish.
- ◆ Set aside twenty minutes some day this week for quiet reflection. Open yourself to the unity of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Pray for your parish, for the deepening of the bond of unity among its members.

CLOSING PRAYER

(The facilitator invites prayers of praise, thanksgiving and petition. To each prayer, members respond, "We praise your goodness, O Lord." The community then prays as follows.)

All: Forever I will sing the goodness of the Lord.

Leader: 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.

All: Forever I will sing the goodness of the Lord.

Leader: 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.

All: Forever I will sing the goodness of the Lord.

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



All: Forever I will sing the goodness of the Lord.

All: Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit. As it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be. Amen.

Leader: Let us go in peace to love and serve and to be loved and be served.

All: Thanks be to God.