

TWELFTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

Year C

Zechariah 12:10-11; 13:1
Psalm 63:2, 3-4, 5-6, 8-9
Galatians 3:26-29
Luke 9:18-24

Gathering

(An unlit candle, a bible open to this week's gospel and some fresh flowers rest on a table in the midst of the community.)

This week we are called to look at our lives to see how we respond to Jesus' question: "Who do you say that I am?"

Prayer

(The candle is lit. The leader invites the community to a time of quiet attention to the presence of God within and among them. After some time of silence, the prayer continues as follows.)

Leader: My soul is thirsting for you, O LORD my God.

All: My soul is thirsting for you, O Lord my God.

Leader: O God, you are my God whom I seek;
for you my flesh pines and my soul thirsts
like the earth, parched, lifeless and without water.

All: My soul is thirsting for you, O Lord my God.

Leader: Thus have I gazed toward you in the sanctuary
to see your power and your glory,
for your kindness is a greater good than life;
my lips shall glorify you.

All: My soul is thirsting for you, O Lord my God.

Leader: Thus will I bless you while I live;

lifting up my hands, I will call upon your name.
As with the riches of a banquet shall my soul be satisfied,
and with exultant lips my mouth shall praise you.

All: My soul is thirsting for you, O Lord my God.

Leader: You are my help,
and in the shadow of your wings I shout for joy.
My soul clings fast to you;
your right hand upholds me.

All: My soul is thirsting for you, O Lord my God.

Psalm 63:2, 3-4, 5-6, 8-9


(A brief selection of instrumental music is played.)

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

 It's a feeling that most of us have had at some time in our lives. Suddenly, your boss turns to you and says, “Well, what do *you* think?” Your first reaction is to say, “What do you mean, what do I think? You're the boss!” The disciples in today's gospel must have had that same sinking feeling when Jesus said to them, “But *you* – who do *you* say that I am?”

We have this Gospel passage before us today, not just to hear what Peter has to say to Jesus, but to hear what Jesus asks of us. He wants us to profess our own unique affirmation of him. Are we with him or against him? Do we know Jesus or is he a mystery to us? What does his presence in our lives mean to us? No one else can answer his question for us. We must answer it ourselves.

At some point in our lives, we have probably imagined that our foremost task in life is to make a difference in this world, to do something that no one else could possibly have done, to be irreplaceable. But the cold hard fact is that the only difference we really make in this world – the one thing that we are called to do as Christians – is to take ownership of our lives and give them away. We achieve our true being only when we no longer cling to it. We save our lives only when we lose them.

“And *you*. Who do *you* say that I am?” We are invited to answer that question every time that we pray. We are invited to answer that question every time that we make a choice in our lives. We are invited to answer that question with every breath that we take.

Questions for Reflection and Conversation

- ◆ What is your response to Jesus’ question, “Who do you say that I am?”
- ◆ How are you *giving your life away* to follow Christ?
- ◆ Name a challenging time in your life when who Christ was to you determined how you responded to the challenge.

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 hear Christ saying to us in hearing and sharing his word?” “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

- ◆ Set aside ten minutes each day this week for reflection and prayer.

Reflect on how you have lived an answer to the question, “Who do you say that I am?”.

- ◆ Support a candidate for the Diaconate with prayer and encouragement. Call your diocesan office for the name and contact information of a deacon candidate to whom you might send some words of support and your promise of prayer.
- ◆ Be like Jesus and reach out to help the hungry, the illiterate and the sick. Go to www.thehungersite.com. With no obligation, one click will cause a cup of rice to be donated. Another will cause money to be given for books. Another click, will help a poor woman get a mammogram. You can re-visit this site on a daily basis.

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 members of the community extend a hand in blessing over each other while the leader prays as follows).

Leader: Jesus, we stand in awe before you. Bless us, we pray, with the power of your life within us to keep you foremost in our minds and hearts. Strengthen us as your body on earth to witness to your saving promise to all. Help us to be you to others and show them by our actions who you truly are. In your Spirit, we pray.

All: Amen.

