

TWENTY-SECOND SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

Year C

Sirach 3:17-18, 20, 28-29
Psalm 68:4-5, 6-7, 10-11
Hebrews 12:18-19, 22-24a
Luke 14:1, 7-14

Gathering

(An unlit candle, a Bible open to this week's gospel and some fresh flowers are arranged on a cloth-covered table in the gathering place.)

Prayer

(The candle is lit. The leader invites the community to a time of silent attention to Christ's presence with them. A selection of instrumental music is played. When the music is complete, members pray as follows.)

All: God, in your goodness, you have made a home for the poor.

I: The just rejoice and exult before God;
they are glad and rejoice.
Sing to God, chant praise to his name;
whose name is the LORD.

All: God, in your goodness, you have made a home for the poor.

II: The father of orphans and the defender of widows
is God in his holy dwelling.
God gives a home to the forsaken;
he leads forth prisoners to prosperity.

All: God, in your goodness, you have made a home for the poor.

I: A bountiful rain you showered down, O God, upon your inheritance;
you restored the land when it languished;
your flock settled in it;
in your goodness, O God, you provided it for the needy.

All: God, in your goodness, you have made a home for the poor.

Psalm 68:4-5, 6-7, 10-11

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

A while back, I had the privilege of visiting the mission compound of the Sisters of Charity in Haiti. I have always been in awe of Mother Teresa and her humility in serving the needs of the poorest of the poor. This visit made all I had read about her work come alive. As we entered the gates, I first noticed how everything was so clean and quiet, both qualities I had not experienced during my first days in Haiti.

The compound was filled with people. There were small children identically dressed in clean clothes, learning in a small classroom. In other rooms, were women being taught to sew; sick and handicapped children being fed a healthy mash of sweet potatoes, squash and bananas in large metal bowls. Dying men and women were being lovingly cared for in another section of the compound. A quote hanging on one of the walls challenged me: “It is not how much we do, but how much love we put into what we do.”

I believe that loving much and humility go hand in hand. Living faithfully is not about how much one does or how much one gives. It is about simply doing what we do with love and remembering what Mother Teresa said; “If we have no peace it is because we have forgotten that we belong to each other.”

Pope Francis also challenges us all when he says, “The world tells us to seek success, power and money; God tells us to seek humility, service and love.” Both Pope Francis and Mother Teresa bring this week’s scriptures to life. Neither is about looking for a place of honor at the world’s table. They choose the lowest place where they can best serve Jesus by serving his people. They go to the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind, the smelly, the uneducated, not looking to be repaid for their work. May their lives inspire us with the desire, the courage and the humility to do the same.

Questions for Reflection and Conversation

- ◆ How well do you know your place?
- ◆ What does being humble mean to you?
- ◆ What seat do you seek at Jesus’ table?
- ◆ How important is it to you to be *paid back* for the things you do for others?

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

- ◆ Volunteer with others in your small community to prepare and serve a meal at a local soup kitchen. When the opportunity presents itself, take a seat at a table with those you have served.
- ◆ Foodshare is the heart of many a city’s or metropolitan area’s hunger fighting network. Learn about its work and how you may participate in it at www.foodshare.org.
- ◆ Instead of rushing to get ahead of someone in the cashier line at some store this week, give way to another who is likewise rushing to get in line.

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.

With the leader providing a copy of the lyrics, members join in singing a familiar hymn. When the song is complete, the prayer continues as follows.)

All: Lord, take me where you want me to go;
 Let me meet who you want me to meet;
 Tell me what you want me to say; and
 Keep me out of your way.

Mychal's Prayer: Praying with Father Mychal
Judge, Salvatore Sapienza

(The session concludes with the exchange of a sign of peace.)

