



THIRTEENTH SUNDAY OF ORDINARY TIME – YEAR A

On this thirteenth Sunday of Ordinary Time the readings and message of God's Word focuses on 'Hospitality'. An invitation to us as Christians to reach out in being a community of faith that cares about others. A community of love that welcomes others whether rich or poor. To have hearts of kindness and eyes to see all people as God's children. Brothers and sisters in Christ.

This virtue of hospitality is a metaphor for God's loving attentiveness for each one of us. God's love and hospitality manifested in Christ. God's call through baptism is his invitation of hospitality in being welcomed into the community of the Blessed Trinity as an adopted son and daughter of our loving God and Father. Covid-19 that we are experiencing at this time challenges us to be aware of our Christian calling in been hospitable to all most in need.

What is noticeable in our readings of God's Word from the first reading of the second Book of Kings and the Gospel of Matthew is that the person who practices hospitality is richly rewarded by God. The kindness of the woman from Shunem to the Prophet Elisha in welcoming him and providing him a place of shelter as a holy man of God is noticed. She is rewarded and blessed with the gift of a son as she was barren. Her hospitality had unexpected consequences. It is modelled by what God does for us.

The Gospel been part of Matthew's 'missionary discourse' as the twelve apostles are sent out by Jesus for mission sets hospitality in context. The mission is an act of hospitality to God in bringing God's saving love to all who will welcome the Gospel message. The Gospel challenges us in taking serious our role as missionary disciples of Christ.

We are called to put Christ and the Good News he proclaimed as a priority in our Christian lives. That the importance of Christ and the urgency of proclaiming and witnessing to the Gospel comes before family. The key focus is to be like Christ. To carry our cross each day to be his worthy disciples.

The Gospel then directs us to been hospitable with eyes of Christ to reach out to all others in need. No one is to be excluded. As the Christ in me/us is the Christ in our brothers and sisters. Our relationship with Christ is worth more than questions of life and death. 'The one who finds their life will lose it; and the one who loses their life for my sake will find it'.

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Our following Jesus and been true missionary disciples will come with its challenges. We may not always be welcomed as we proclaim the truth of the Gospel but we must not give up. Our perseverance and hospitality will be rewarded by God.

St Paul's Letter to the Romans and us directs us to what God in his great hospitality has done for us through Christ. Our baptism into the life of Christ. The intimate relationship with him and our participation in Christ's death and resurrection is the grounds for us to be dead to sin and alive in Christ.

Our intimacy with Christ and God who sent him is at the heart of the call to be Christians of 'Hospitality'. May we strive to be aware of this call in a special way with the challenges of Covid-19. Let us pray for one another.

Yours sincerely in Christ,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'P. Holiday', is enclosed in a light grey rectangular box.

Bishop Peter Holiday