



## LIVING THE GOSPEL



### Thirteenth Sunday of Ordinary Time June 28, 2026

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**Theme: "Anyone who loses his life for my sake will find it"**

#### **Gathering Prayer**

**Facilitator:** O God, who through the grace of adoption chose us to be children of light, grant, we pray, that we may not be wrapped in the darkness of error but always be seen to stand in the bright light of truth. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever.

**All:** Amen.

#### **Exploring the Word**

##### **Gospel Reading: Matthew 10:37-42**

<sup>37</sup> "Anyone who prefers father or mother to me is not worthy of me. Anyone who prefers son or daughter to me is not worthy of me. <sup>38</sup> Anyone who does not take his cross and follow in my footsteps is not worthy of me <sup>39</sup> Anyone who finds his life will lose it; anyone who loses his life for my sake will find it. <sup>40</sup> "Anyone who welcomes you welcomes me; and those who welcome me welcome the one who sent me. <sup>41</sup> "Anyone who welcomes a prophet because he is a prophet will have a prophet's reward; and anyone who welcomes a holy man because he is a holy man will have a holy man's reward. <sup>42</sup> "If anyone gives so much as a cup of cold water to one of these little ones because he is a disciple, then I tell you solemnly, he will most certainly not lose his reward."

#### **Gospel Focus**

Jesus' teaching to the Twelve has extended over the past couple Sundays, and today's instruction might be the most difficult yet. Not only are disciples challenged to endure persecution, but also to put their family second to their mission. The "good news" does not always feel good. With this harsh warning, Jesus introduces one of the great paradoxes of the Christian life in self-emptying love, we find ourselves. The initial example Jesus gives for the apostles is hospitality. The person who receives another receives Christ himself. The likely intention of the phrase "little ones" is to refer to the disciples still growing in faith, but this can be exploited in our imagining to include all those in need of "a cup of water"-the poor, the vulnerable, the marginalized. This passage also points forward to Matthew's account of the Last Judgement in chapter 25: "Whatever you did for the one of these least brothers of mine, you did for me." Again hospitality is the criterion on which the follower of Jesus will be held to account.

## **Gospel Reflection**

For what or for whom would you be willing to give your life? Many people would answer that they would give their lives for their spouse or their children. Many a mother with a sick child has been heard to say that she would gladly take the illness upon herself rather than see her child suffer. In a community discussion about the choices women religious have made in responding to Vatican II, a sister in her golden years asserted, "I would give my life for who we are and what we have become and who we shall be in the future." She went on, "I have nothing to lose. When you get to be this age, you have become so in love with God and God's people, it is easy to pour yourself out in love."

In today's gospel, Jesus sets up a contrast: think of those most precious to you, such as your parents or your children. Just as your love for them has expanded your heart in such a way that you would do anything for them, even more does love for Jesus fill us to overflowing, so that those who follow him could pour out their very lives for Christ's little ones. To some people, such an other-centered life seems senseless, a loss of one's own autonomy and ability to pursue one's desires. Paradoxically, the gospel message is that those who become schooled in losing their life in love for others actually find a life so fulfilling that any other way seems a waste.

Choosing this kind of life, however, is not entirely easy or without cost. Just as any love relationship flourishes only when both parties are willing to let their own desires, plans, and dreams be shaped by the other, leading to an ultimate surrender of self, so too does discipleship ask for such relinquishment. In the letting go, however, also comes finding of a new self that leads to joy and delight. Jesus is not asking for obliteration of self, as when people are trapped in systems of domination or poverty, where their sense of self is taken from them. He is speaking to disciples who are empowered persons who have the ability to choose to surrender themselves in love for his sake.

When Jesus speaks of rewards for receiving a prophet, or a righteous person, or for giving a "cup of cold water to one of these little ones...because the little one is a disciple," he is not talking about what his followers get for the sacrifices they make. These words come at the end of Jesus' address to the Twelve as he is sending them out on mission. He is referring to the reception they will get from others, and the blessings that will come to those who open themselves to the apostles, Jesus describes a kind of domino effect. Anyone who receives his disciples receives Jesus and receives the one who sent him. Both those who are sent on mission and those who receive them are drawn into the circle of divine love.

## **Old/New Testament and CCC links**

### **First Reading — 2 Kings 4:8-11, 14-16a**

<sup>8</sup> One day as Elisha was on his way to Shunem, a woman of rank who lived there pressed him to stay and eat there. After this he always broke his journey for a meal when he passed that way. <sup>9</sup> She said to her husband, "Look, I am sure the man who is constantly passing our way must be a holy man of God. <sup>10</sup> Let us build him a small room on the roof, and put him a bed in it, and a table and chair and lamp; whenever he comes to us he can rest there." <sup>11</sup> One day when he came, he retired to the upper room and lay down. <sup>14</sup> "What can be done for her then?" he asked. Gehazi answered, "Well, she has no son and her husband is old." <sup>15</sup> Elisha said, "Call her." The servant called her and she stood at the door. <sup>16</sup> "This time next year," he said, "you will hold a son in your arms."

### **Responsorial Reading — Ps 89:2-3, 16-17, 18-19**

***R: Forever I will sing the goodness of the Lord.***

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. **(R)**

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. **(R)**

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. **(R)**

**Second Reading — Romans 6:3-4, 8-11**

<sup>3</sup> You have been taught that when we were baptized in Christ Jesus we were baptized in his death; <sup>4</sup> in other words, when we were baptized we went into the tomb with him and joined him in death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead by the Father's glory, we too might live a new life. <sup>8</sup> But we believe that having died with Christ we shall return to life with him: <sup>9</sup> Christ, as we know, having been raised from the dead will never die again. Death <sup>10</sup> has no power over him any more. • When he died, he died, once for all, to sin, so his life now is life with God ; <sup>11</sup> and in that way, you too must consider yourselves to be dead to sin but alive for God in Christ Jesus.

**Catechism of The Catholic Church**

**858.** Jesus is the Father's Emissary. From the beginning of his ministry, he "called to him those whom he desired;. . . . And he appointed twelve, whom also he named apostles, to be with him, and to be sent out to preach."<sup>368</sup> From then on, they would also be his "emissaries" (Greek apostoloi). In them, Christ continues his own mission: "As the Father has sent me, even so I send you."<sup>369</sup> The apostles' ministry is the continuation of his mission; Jesus said to the Twelve: "he who receives you receives me."<sup>370</sup>

**1506.** Christ invites his disciples to follow him by taking up their cross in their turn..<sup>114</sup> By following him they acquire a new outlook on illness and the sick. Jesus associates them with his own life of poverty and service. He makes them share in his ministry of compassion and healing: "So they went out and preached that men should repent. And they cast out many demons, and anointed with oil many that were sick and healed them."<sup>115</sup>

**2232.** Family ties are important but not absolute. Just as the child grows to maturity and human and spiritual autonomy, so his unique vocation which comes from God asserts itself more clearly and forcefully. Parents should respect this call and encourage their children to follow it. They must be convinced that the first vocation of the Christian is to follow Jesus: "He who loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me; and he who loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me."<sup>39</sup>

## **Sharing and Discussion**

1. Jesus tells us that to follow Him, we must carry our cross and put Him first. Does this mean a Christian life is meant to be one of constant pain and sacrifice? Or did carrying of your cross result in joy that brought about a greater awareness of life's purpose?
2. Describe a time where you had to choose between human expectations and God's call. What was the greatest challenge you had to overcome in that moment, and what did you learn about your life priorities in the process?
3. Discuss **CCC 2232**.

## **Closing Prayer**

**Facilitators:** Loving God, hear these prayers we raise today. May we give our thoughts, words, and actions over to you so that you may work in us. We ask this through Jesus Christ our Lord.

**All:** Amen.

**Leader:** May the Lord bless us, protect us from all evil and bring us to everlasting life.

**All:** Amen

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**Looking to deepen your faith and connect with fellow parishioners? Join us for our "Living the Gospel" Bible study and sharing session at the parish. Together, we will reflect on God's Word, grow in faith, and journey together in fellowship.**

**Day and Time:** Every Saturday from 9.30 – 11.00 am

**Venue:** Level 3, Rm 03-06

**All are welcome!** For more information, please contact;

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Reflection material available on Parish Website under – (Weekly Bible Sharing - Living the Gospel)

References for the Living the Gospel Reflection:

- 1) Gospel notes taken from the Navarre Bible
- 2) Gospel reflection and Living Liturgy are taken from "Living Liturgy for Sunday and Solemnities" by Order of St Benedict. Published by Liturgical Press, Collegeville, Minnesota. Reprinted with permission.
- 3) CCC references are taken from Catechism of the Catholic Church