

13th Sunday in Ordinary Time

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Today's Readings invite us to ask a simple but challenging question: How much room do I make for Christ in my life?

In the Gospel, Jesus speaks words that may sound harsh: "Whoever loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me." Jesus, however, is not asking us to love our families less; He is asking us to love Him first. When Christ occupies the first place in our hearts, every other relationship becomes purer, stronger, and more loving.

The First Reading gives us a beautiful example. A wealthy woman of Shunem noticed that the prophet Elisha frequently passed through her town. She did not simply admire him from a distance, she opened her home to him. Eventually, she and her husband built a small room with a bed, a table, a chair, and a lamp so that this man of God will always have a place to stay when he is in town. Notice that Elisha never asked for anything. Her hospitality sprang from her generous heart. She made room for God's servant, and in doing so, she made room for God Himself. Consequently, the Lord rewarded her generosity with the gift she had long desired: a son. The same invitation is made to us today. Christ asks each of us: "Is there room for Me in your home? Is there room for Me in your daily schedule? Is there room for Me in your heart?"

St. Paul, in the Second Reading, reminds us that through Baptism we have died with Christ and risen to a new life. This means Christianity is not simply about believing certain truths; it is about becoming a new person. Every day we are called to die to selfishness, pride, anger, and sin so that Christ may live more fully in us.

There is a beautiful story from the life of Saint Benedict Joseph Labre, who was a poor pilgrim who owned almost nothing. He wandered from one shrine to another, spending much of his life in prayer. Because of his ragged clothes and poverty, many people ignored him or drove him away.



One cold evening, a family welcomed him into their home. They offered him a simple meal and a place to sleep. The next morning, before leaving, Benedict thanked them and said: “You have welcomed not a beggar, but Christ in disguise.” Those simple words remained with the family for the rest of their lives. They realized that every act of kindness offered for the love of God reaches Christ Himself. This is exactly what Jesus teaches us in today’s Gospel: “Whoever welcomes a prophet... whoever welcomes a righteous person... whoever gives even a cup of cold water to one of these little ones... will not lose his reward.” Notice that Jesus does not speak about performing extraordinary miracles, He speaks about ordinary acts done with extraordinary love: a welcome; a visit; a smile; a meal; a cup of cold water. Small actions become great in God’s eyes when they are inspired by love.

Many people think holiness requires doing spectacular things. The saints teach us that it is otherwise. Holiness often consists of doing ordinary things with great love: a parent patiently caring for a child; a student helping a classmate; a neighbour visiting someone who is lonely; or a parishioner welcoming a newcomer. These may seem insignificant, yet in God’s kingdom they have eternal value.

As we celebrate this Eucharist, let us ask ourselves:

Do I make room for Christ each day through prayer?

Do I welcome Christ in the people who come into my life?

Do I carry my cross with faith, following Him?

And do I offer my own “cup of cold water” through simple acts of charity?

May the Lord give us hearts like the woman of Shunem: lives transformed by our baptism and being generous enough to welcome Him, so that in every person that we meet, we will recognize Christ Himself.