



Thirteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time
† Sunday 2nd July 2017

In England and Wales Cycle of Prayer:

Those who suffer persecution, and denial of human rights

Keynote: Welcome all who come in the name of God

Second Book of Kings 4: 8-11, 14-16

Elisha – the holy man of God – meets with a resourceful and determined woman – a woman of rank – who encourages the prophet to break his journey and stay to eat with the household. After this Elisha always breaks his journey for a meal when passing that way. The woman tells her husband: *‘Look, I am sure the man who is constantly passing our way must be a holy man of God.’* So they build a small room on the roof, making up a bed in it they provide a table, chair and a lamp. So that, *‘whenever he comes to us he can rest there.’* Hospitality is a central lesson in this passage, as also is the encouragement to us to be ready to recognise the holiness of God in others and to offer a warm welcome to the traveller. The reading prepares our minds for a better understanding of the words of Jesus recorded in the gospel text chosen for this day.

Responsorial Psalm 88 [89] – I will sing of the wonderful promises of God

Letter of Paul to the Romans 6: 3-4, 8-11

‘You have been taught,’ writes Paul *‘that when we were baptized in Christ Jesus we were baptized in his death... 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.’* Plunged into the waters of baptism we die to sin, and rising from the waters we are reborn into a new life. The resurrection of Jesus opens up a new life – a life full of opportunity for the Christian disciple: *‘you must consider yourselves to be dead to sin but alive for God in Christ Jesus.’* I find this opportunity a constant challenge, ever fresh and always new.

The Gospel according to Matthew 10: 37-42

Jesus, instructing the Twelve about what it means to be a disciple makes a radical call: *‘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. Anyone who does not take up his cross and follow in my steps is not worthy of me.’* Then Jesus tells the Twelve: *‘Anyone who welcomes you welcomes me; and those who welcome me welcome the one who sent me.’* To understand the meaning better it may help us to appreciate that an agent, maybe one sent by a landlord to his tenant, was accepted as if the agent were himself the landlord in person. Readers may be familiar with the story elsewhere of the unjust tenants and what they did to the servants and finally how the landlord sent his own son to represent him. Here, Jesus drives home the lesson of hospitality and welcome: *‘If anyone gives so much as a cup of water to one of these little ones because he is my disciple, then I tell you solemnly, he will certainly not lose his reward.’* We are being urged to take a radical look at our discipleship this day, and also to examine the welcome we offer to others, whether they are travellers, a stranger, the poor or someone in need. Follow Christ – he is a demanding friend, this is what he asks of you as Paul says: *‘You must consider yourselves to be dead to sin but alive for God in Christ Jesus.’*