

**READINGS AND REFLECTION  
FOR THE 13<sup>TH</sup> SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME**

(from the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops  
<http://usccb.org/bible/readings/062120.cfm>)

**FIRST READING - FROM THE SECOND BOOK OF THE KINGS 4: 8-11; 14-16a**

One day Elisha came to Shunem,  
where there was a woman of influence, who urged him to dine with her.  
Afterward, whenever he passed by, he used to stop there to dine.  
So she said to her husband, "I know that Elisha is a holy man of God.  
Since he visits us often, let us arrange a little room on the roof  
and furnish it for him with a bed, table, chair, and lamp,  
so that when he comes to us he can stay there."

Sometime later Elisha arrived and stayed in the room overnight.

Later Elisha asked, "Can something be done for her?"

His servant Gehazi answered, "Yes!

She has no son, and her husband is getting on in years."

Elisha said, "Call her."

When the woman had been called and stood at the door,

Elisha promised, "This time next year you will be fondling a baby son."

The Word of the Lord.

**RESPONSORIAL PSALM      Ps 89 : 2-3, 16-17, 18-19**

**RESPONSE:    FOR EVER 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.

**FOR EVER I WILL SING THE GOODNESS OF THE LORD.**

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. For ever I will sing the goodness of the Lord.**

You are the splendour of their strength,  
and by your favour, our horn is exalted.  
To the LORD belongs our shield;  
The Holy One of Israel is our king.  
**R. For ever I will sing the goodness of the Lord.**

### **A READING FROM THE ST PAUL'S LETTER TO THE ROMANS 6: 3-4, 8-11**

Brothers and sisters:  
are you unaware that we who were baptized into Christ Jesus  
were baptized into his death?  
We were indeed buried with him through baptism into death,  
so that, just as Christ was raised from the dead  
by the glory of the Father,  
we too might live in newness of life.

If, then, we have died with Christ,  
we believe that we shall also live with him.  
We know that Christ, raised from the dead, dies no more;  
death no longer has power over him.  
As to his death, he died to sin once and for all;  
as to his life, he lives for God.  
Consequently, you too must think of yourselves as dead to sin  
and living for God in Christ Jesus.

The Word of the Lord.

You are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation;  
announce the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his  
wonderful light. 1 Peter 2:9

## A READING FROM THE HOLY GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW 10: 37 - 42

Jesus said to his apostles:

“Whoever loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me,  
and whoever loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me;  
and whoever does not take up his cross  
and follow after me is not worthy of me.  
Whoever finds his life will lose it,  
and whoever loses his life for my sake will find it.

"Whoever receives you receives me,  
and whoever receives me receives the one who sent me.  
Whoever receives a prophet because he is a prophet  
will receive a prophet's reward,  
and whoever receives a righteous man because he is a righteous man  
will receive a righteous man's reward.  
And whoever gives only a cup of cold water  
to one of these little ones to drink  
because the little one is a disciple—  
amen, I say to you, he will surely not lose his reward.”

The Gospel of the Lord.

### **REFLECTION**

People who suffer losses in their lives and continue to grow in kindness and service are powerful in their impact on others who can see what has happened. We need to be important supports for one another. Sometimes we can meet people like Elisha who are authentic prophets concerning possibilities for us. We all have dreams and hopes. Sometimes, priorities require us to make hard choices. From where do we draw our strength when our dreams and hopes are not realised or crash?

The Kingdom of God is God's Dream for all. Imagine the wisdom and kindness in God's Dream that all the peoples of the world – so diverse and often so divisive - should have a place 'with God' for eternity. In the meantime, the Gospels give us snapshots of God's Kingdom amongst us with people trusting, giving of themselves, forgiving, having compassion and responding with wonder. The reality is that we struggle in our personal circumstances and relationships, and with issues concerning politics, justice, ethics and the economy, and as stewards of the environment.

The struggles are real, often harsh and evolving. Our experiences of God's Kingdom amongst us can be setback for various reasons including our personal sin, sinful

structures beyond our control and our poor choices. However, Christian Baptism into the death and resurrection of Christ informs us that 'in Christ', no evil can have absolute power over us concerning our integrity in our relationships with God and with one another. Even the bad that happens to good people can in fact be opportunities for God's grace-filled initiatives in our choices and behaviours.

All the Christian Sacraments help us recognize God's initiative in our lives. Together, the Sacraments of Initiation (Baptism, Confirmation and the Eucharist) do not form a one-off event in which we 'get done'. Together, they are there to help us grow in our identity 'in Christ' - life-long. The Celebration of Baptism happens only once. It is completed in our once-only celebration of Confirmation. However, our reflection on their meanings and support for us nourishes us all through our lives. We can participate in the Eucharist all through our lives – through the good and hard times. The Eucharist - 'food for our Journey' - continually renews us and initiates us into new awarenesses for our living the Paschal Mystery of Christ in our changing circumstances. As members of the Body of Christ, we are continually reflecting on what that means for our response to others and to all that is happening in our world.

The Baptismal ceremony has life-giving actions, symbols and words which clothe our incorporation into Christ and into the Body of Christ.

We are signed on the forehead with the Cross. We respond to God's Word in faith. We 'plunge' into the life of Christ – in the waters of baptism – and rise in Christ Risen, washed and regenerated. Plunged in or poured over with water three times, we are immersed in the life of God – "I baptize you in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit." We celebrate sacramentally our lives as being immersed in the life of God for eternity!

We are signed with the Oil of Catechumens which is olive oil. Lathered in oil, wrestlers cannot grip one another; so too, it is impossible for evil to overcome the wisdom and strength of Christ which we, in our humanity, seek as baptized persons.

Our heads are signed with the Oil of Chrism with its beautiful fragrance, blending olive oil and balsam. Anointed with the gift of the Holy Spirit, we are consecrated to be strong in the beauty of God's life and service as members of the Body of Christ.

A white garment symbolizes our having put on Christ. With Easter faith, we light our Baptismal Candle from Paschal Candle. Our Godparents need to witness to Easter faith and to be special supports for us from within the Body of Christ.

How can the Kingdom of God and the Paschal Mystery of Christ inform our dreams? Who is with us, waiting for us, when our dreams are not realised or crash? Mary MacKillop said, "Let's go on!"