

ELEVENTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

CYCLE A

Exodus 19:2-6a

Romans 5:6-11

Matthew 9:36—10:8

(An unlit candle, an open bible and a recent newspaper rest on a table in the midst of the community.)

OPENING PRAYER

(When members are gathered, the candle is lit. The facilitator calls the community to a time of silent attention to the presence of God.)

Leader: Let us begin as we begin all good things.

All: In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

Leader: Many things have happened in the last week in our world and in our lives that require God's mercy. Let's take a few moments to recall those events that have touched us this past week.

(After a few moments of quiet, the facilitator invites mention of those events in our world that beg for God's mercy.)

Leader: God, our world cries out to you. Choose leaders and raise up disciples in our world, in our nation, in our community and in our families to help bring your mercy and love to your people. We see from scripture that your choices are often surprising. Empower us, O God, to bring healing to our world.

All: Where we lack wisdom, give us wisdom.
Where we lack faith, strengthen us in faith.
Where we lack hope, stir up hope.
Where we lack love, fill us with love.
In Jesus' name we pray.

COMMENTARY

Our readings this week, especially the gospel, are about mission. God chose Moses to lead his people from Egypt to the promised land. Jesus chose the apostles from among his disciples to bring the real Promised Land, the kingdom of God, to all people. We are God's people today. How are we to bring good news, healing to our world?

It is hard for us to imagine ourselves in the same light as Moses, Peter, Matthew or Mary Magdalene. We are certainly not worthy to be numbered in their company! But are we? Moses killed a man. Peter denied Jesus three times. Matthew was a tax collector who, if he was like other tax collectors of his day, cheated and extorted. Mary Magdalene was a woman possessed by seven demons. Were they worthy?

Jesus makes us worthy. God loves us no matter who we are or what we have done. Jesus calls us from where we are to be at his side. From there – with faith – we can do whatever it is we need to do, whatever life calls us to do. That is the life of a believer, a disciple. A disciple is a follower who acts on what he believes. An apostle is a disciple who is sent on a mission. That is why we gather at Eucharist and gather in this community – to be strengthened, to be sent on mission. That is where we go from here – on mission. But we will return again and again to the Eucharist gathering and to this community, because we cannot do God's work alone. We need each other; we need Jesus. He promised to be with us when we are together and when we are on mission in his name. We need each other and, more importantly, we need Jesus who promised us that he would be with us when we are together and when we act in his name.

FAITH SHARING AND INTEGRATION

- ◆ What does being worthy to do God's work mean to you?
- ◆ What are those times in your life that you have felt a sense of mission? What was it that stirred up that sense of mission? How do you respond?
- ◆ When have you been surprised by God's choices of people to be his instruments of grace in your life?

RESPONSE IN ACTION

- ◆ Take the lead. Volunteer first the next time you hear a call for help.
- ◆ Celebrate the sacrament of reconciliation this week. Be ever more deeply healed that you may bring a deeper healing to those around you.
- ◆ Reach out in support of a caregiver who needs a break. Take the person's place for several hours so he/she can rest and recharge.

CLOSING PRAYER

(Members gather in a circle. Together they sing, "Here I Am, Lord," The song may be found on the Internet. When the song is complete, they extend their hands over each other as the leader prays.)

Leader: Send down your Spirit, Lord. We offer ourselves in service to your kingdom. Send us forth just as you did Moses and your apostles. We are your disciples. Empower us as you did those who walked with you. Walk with us, Lord. Lead us to bring your light to the people of God. In Jesus' name we pray.

All: Amen.

