



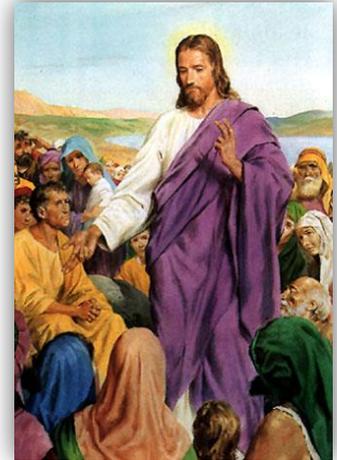
2 July 2017

The Gospel & Homily ✝ el Evangelio y la Homilía  
the 13th Sunday in Ordinary Time

**Gospel**

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."



**Homily** *Rev. Deacon Suzanne Dilts*

In today's reading, I found myself pondering long and hard to make sense of the lesson being taught. In the first reading, we find Elisha asking to say Good-bye and to get his affairs in order, before following Elijah. Maybe a reasonable request, but we don't always get the time to do that. Some lives are cut short before being ready to depart. The lesson here is to have your affairs in order and be on good terms with God. Don't expect to be allowed a bedside confession. "I take refuge in the Lord." I use Him as my good example. He gives me confidence that He will not abandon me and will keep me out of trouble if I follow His word. He will always guide us on the right path and love us, unconditionally. This confidence assures us, He always has our back. This brings up the subject of free will. The church uses the "age of reason" to make us responsible for our actions. I don't believe there is an actual age, it's more or less when you can tell right from wrong. We all stray, we all commit sin, some more than others, and all the time, we are with sin and away from God, He is just waiting for us to say we are sorry and find our way back to Him. He is always there for us. Remember, you are the one who left Him. Returning to Him for forgiveness, is like the safety you feel running to your parents and them wrapping their arms around you and saying they love and forgive you for whatever you did wrong. We are asked to love our neighbor as ourself. What does that mean? How about, treating everyone the way you want to be treated? If that doesn't happen, do you have the right to harm the one who has treated you poorly? No, that only means you have stooped to their level instead of holding your head high and being Christ-like. "I will sing forever of your love, O Lord." This means recognizing and welcoming Christ and living in His way by offering hospitality and sharing graces with all and stop judging people. "Whoever welcomes you, welcomes me and whoever welcomes me, welcomes the one who sent me." Have you ever heard or seen stories of Jesus disguised as a poor and disheveled man, coming into an establishment and being treated as less of a man because of His eco-social status? Have we ever treated someone with less respect and dignity in a situation like this? Our job is not to

judge the person next to us but to make them feel welcome and included. When we think of Christ as human, we often see Him as Matthew described Him as "One of the least of these." We should see Christ in those who are hungry, thirsty, lonely, sick, in anyone who is in need. This service Christ is asking for, we should freely give to our neighbors. We as Christians, are called to love God above all else. Unless we have the divine love of Christ, we are unable to love anyone else. Our love needs to be universal. God is "Our Father" and we all belong to His family. The way we serve others, the way to fulfill God's purpose for us, the way to happiness is to spend our life selflessly and then we will be full of life here and in the hereafter. God Bless, Amen.

