

Eleventh Sunday in Ordinary Time (Yr A)

[Reading I: Ex 19:2-6a](#)

[Responsorial Psalm: Ps 100:1-2, 3, 5](#)

[Reading II: Romans 5:6-11](#)

[Gospel: Matthew 9:36—10:8](#)

The readings may be found at:

<https://bible.usccb.org/bible/readings/061823.cfm>



With the Eleventh Sunday, the Church returns to Ordinary Time Sundays and the Gospel according to Matthew. It is ordinary in two ways. God acted in extraordinary ways to reestablish a relationship with humanity in becoming human (the Incarnation - Christmas) and in loving us through suffering, death, and rising to new life (the Paschal Mystery – Holy Week and Easter season). God also works with us in ordinary ways every day of our life. These ordinary, daily, usual life experiences are now reflected upon during the coming months. Secondly, these Sundays are called by ordinary numbers, 2 through 34. The early numbers were before lent, and we resume with the 11th week.

The Gospel passage comes at the end of a chapter in which Jesus had healed several people of their afflictions. Jesus has shown and now expresses his compassion for the people of his time “for they were like sheep without a shepherd.”

Jesus then recognizes the need for additional people to widen his ministry of offering good news, announcing the reign of God, healing the sick, and freeing those who are bound by evil. Jesus called twelve of his disciples and sent them (Apostle means one who is sent with the authority of the sender) to continue his ministry with the people of Israel. (The commission to go to all the world does not come until the Ascension.) They go to the other villages and communities that Jesus had not visited. This is the only place that Matthew uses the term, apostle.

The Church continues this ministry today through evangelizing work, education, healthcare, and spiritual healing. It is a ministry in service of God and never for one’s glorification. Each person is gifted in a particular way to participate in this mission given by Jesus. A person may not have a public or a large ministry but sharing God’s compassion and love with a child, an elderly person, or a good friend, brings forth the reign of God for them.

The first reading comes from the Book of Exodus and begins shortly after the people have reached Mt. Sinai. God instructs Moses to remind the people that it was by God’s action and not their own efforts that they were freed from slavery. God invites them to listen to God and be in a covenant relationship with God.

A covenant is a total commitment to the other. The Church understands marriage as a covenant. Contracts are if ... then agreements. If you do this work, then I will pay you. A covenant is a total commitment, for better or worse, for richer or poorer. God offers this relationship to Israel. God will be their God and they shall be God’s special possession, “a kingdom of priests, a holy nation.” Priests were understood as the ones who could talk directly to God and intercede for others. Israel would have a relationship with God and be able to communicate with God. This was a unique understanding in the ancient world. The church continues in this understanding. In Baptism, Christians become the daughters and sons of God, an even more intimate relationship. God commits to each person to be with them and listen to them.

In the verses before our second reading from St. Paul's letter to the Romans, Paul has been speaking about how God has justified us, which has brought us into the right relationship. This can be recognized by the presence of the Holy Spirit in believers' lives. It was not anything that people did to earn this relationship, but it was because God loved each person. Christ died for each person before anyone knew God. God reconciled each person and that is the basis for being in a relationship with God. Each person is loved by God from the beginning.

Themes:

Relationship with God

Intercessory prayer

The Mission of the Church

Priestly People

Christian Vocation

Justification

Reflection Questions:

How have you witnessed or experienced the mission of Jesus continuing today in the church community or through individuals?

How do you live or would like to live the mission of Jesus in your life?

How have you experienced a Covenant relationship?

How are you called to pray for the needs of others?

How do you respond to the fact that God loved you while you were still unaware of God?

Prayer Suggestions:

For the Church: that we may grow in our awareness of to whom we belong and live the mission of Christ as God's called and chosen people

For a deeper experience of God's love: that we may know that we are unconditionally loved by God just as we are today amid our relationships, our work, and our struggles

For Pope Francis and all bishops, successors to the apostles: that they will guide the Church toward fuller unity and more effective proclamation of the truth

For the grace of compassion: that the suffering and searching of others may move our hearts and that the Spirit will guide us in offering hope, purpose, and healing to those around us

For all Christians: that we may exercise our role as a priestly people and intercede before God for all who do not know God, for those who have grown cold in their faith, and for all who are suffering from the lack of love in the human community

For more laborers for God's vineyard: that God will touch the hearts of many to share in the ministries of teaching, healing, community building, and assistance to those in need