

Eleventh Sunday in Ordinary Time

Reading I: Exodus 19:2-6a; Responsorial Psalm: Psalm 100: 1-2, 3, 5; Reading II: Romans 5:6-11;
Gospel: Matthew 9:36-10:8

June 12, 2005

Preacher: *Sister Elizabeth O'Donnell*

The Harvest is Abundant But The Laborers Are Few

Today's readings express a call to priesthood and to ministry to one another. Both of these are brought into a richer light by the fact of God's deep love for us as shown in each of the readings.

In the first reading from Exodus, God says, "...if you hear my voice and keep my covenant, you shall be my special possession, dearer to me than all other people..." You shall be to me a kingdom of priests, a holy nation." In this call to relationship can be heard a passionate and loving God who desires to be close and united so much so that a covenant is offered.

In the second reading from Romans, Paul tries to help us understand this incredible mystery of Jesus' sacrifice for us. Paul explains that only with some difficulty does a person die for another who is just, and one might even find courage to die for someone who is good. But for those of us who are and continue to be sinful, Jesus died, how much more have we been "justified by his blood" and "will we be saved by his life." This is a powerful and central truth of our faith.

Finally, in today's Gospel, we hear of Jesus' deep care and concern for us; "Jesus' heart was moved with pity for them because they were troubled and abandoned..." The truth is, as we know from the second reading, that we are imperfect and wounded, yet profoundly loved. The Gospel continues to explain that Jesus summoned his twelve disciples and gave them authority to continue his own ministry of "authority over unclean spirits...and to cure every disease and every illness." The apostles are named. Here we find insight into this profound call. The apostles made up a motley crew, the first of which is Simon called Peter. This *Petros*, meant not a rock as in a large hunk one can cling to, but rather, just a tiny pebble; a tiny pebble upon which Jesus chose to build his church. Jesus believed so much in the power of God that he called one weak in faith.

We were called as weak and imperfect because God is able to work through us to bring about a kingdom of love, faith and justice. We have been chosen by God *because* we are weak and wounded. How do we respond to such profound love, trust and confidence? Jesus tells us, "Without cost you have received; without cost you are to give."