

Jesus' heart was moved with pity
for them
because they were troubled and
abandoned,
like sheep without a shepherd.
- Matthew 9

Tenth Week of Ordinary Time: June 8-14, 2008

The Tenth Week of Ordinary Time

The **Tenth Sunday in Ordinary Time** allows us to reflect upon the call of the tax collector, Matthew, because Jesus is criticized for eating and drinking with sinners. Jesus calls his critics and us to go learn the meaning of these words, *"I desire mercy, not sacrifice." I did not come to call the righteous but sinners.*

Wednesday is the **Memorial of Saint Barnabas, Apostle**. Friday is the **Memorial of Saint Anthony of Padua, priest and doctor of the Church**.

The first reading is from the **First Book of Kings**. It is a collection of stories about the kings of the people and recounts their fidelity and infidelity. This week we have great stories about the great Prophet Elijah. We continue for the next two weeks with the stories about Elisha.

This week we begin reading the **Gospel According to Matthew**, starting with the **Sermon on the Mount**. Jesus is the new Moses, and offers us a new and radical teaching. It begins by his telling a small group of followers that they are blessed - not because they have their acts together, but because they are spiritually poor, meek, those desiring justice, the merciful, the clean of heart, the peacemakers and the persecuted. Salt and light explain who they are as disciples. Whereas the law forbade killing, Jesus calls his disciples to be reconcilers. The law forbade adultery, but Jesus warns about lust and whatever is an occasion for sinning. The law forbade taking false oaths, but Jesus calls his disciples to a deeper fidelity and integrity.

Sunday begins the **Eleventh Week in Ordinary Time**. In **Matthew's Gospel**, Jesus missions his disciples to go out into the world: "Cure the sick, raise the dead, cleanse lepers, drive out demons. Without cost you have received; without cost you are to give." It is a message for us as Jesus tells us "The harvest is plenty but the laborers are few" and calls us to

Daily Prayer This Week

All this week, the Sermon on the Mount can help us be contemplatives in action. The Beatitudes are not eight new commandments. Rather, Jesus saw those following him and saw their weakness and their need, their goodness and their desire, even the cost they are paying for following him. He looked at them and called them "Blessed."

This week we might practice letting Jesus look at us this way. Each morning we can practice choosing to focus our attention on some way we are spiritually poor or desiring justice, some way we are merciful or a peace maker, some way we might be experiencing the cost of being a believer, and simply asking our Lord to convince us of our blessedness there. It is likely that each of us, every day, can be attentive to some aspect of our daily lives, some part of our relationships or responsibilities, that place us right there in a place for Jesus to tell us that we will be comforted, satisfied, blessed beyond our imagining.

Some day this week, each of us will have the opportunity to be the salt that makes relationships, faithful living, have its flavor. We will have our chances to be light in the midst of the darkness that crosses our paths. We can ask Jesus those days - whether in the morning, or in brief background moments during the day - to have us not lose our flavor or to cover our light. And, all of us will face the greater responsibility of being a disciple of Jesus, to avoid anger and find the path to reconciliation, to turn from lust and greed and to love genuinely and honestly.

Dear Lord, As I open my hands and offer myself to you, I ask that you help me to be more faithful in my relationships this week. Help me especially to have the courage not to hide but to offer my services to those around me who need me - even those who are difficult for me to deal with. Bless me this day with

join him in his work.

*trust in you and guide me in all that I do to
honor you today.*