

13th Sun A.... New life

Introduction...

This morning's readings speak of 'newness' of life –

Elisha brings a 'new life' into the lives of a childless couple, because of their kindness, the first reading tells us.

Paul reminds us in the second reading that those of us who were baptized have a 'new life' in Jesus.

What is this 'new life'?

I Following Jesus

The Gospel gives us a hint about what this 'new life' is about.

It's a hard saying of Jesus – a challenge to understand:

...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. (Mt 10:37ff)

In some way this 'new life' of the Christian has to do with Jesus being at the very center of our life.

Which leads us to ask...

*Is Jesus at the center of my life?
What do I think about most of the time?
What is at the center of my life?
What is my life all about?*

A while ago I wrote this poetic reflection...

The Little People (Mandeville, W.I.)

We are the little people

Straining for greatness
Or success
Or something
Anything meaningful.

We are the little people
Buying more now
Enjoying it less
What a useless
Mess.

We are the little people
Stuck in our little stories
Our little complaints
Struggling to survive
And wanting to thrive
Staying alive
Staying alive.

We are the little people

With little meaning
Little vitality
Living little lives
Dying little deaths.

But...
Mary was a little woman
Born in a little village
Part of a little country.
She had little dreams
Little hopes
A little life.

Til...
An angel spoke to her...
Her heart blazed
The Almighty did great things
For her

All generations now call
Her blessed
God's chosen one.

We are the little people
And yet...
We are God's chosen ones
Part of God's story
Companions of Christ
Enlisted in the struggle
Of good against evil
Of peace against violence
Of love against hatred.

We are God's chosen ones
Called to
Feed the hungry
Clothe the naked
Help the homeless
Visit the sick
And imprisoned
Quench the thirsty.

We are God's chosen ones
Part of God's story
Each day
Every day
An angel speaks to us...
"Hail you who are graced,
the Lord is with you."
Can we hear it?
Can we arise to the message?
We are God's beloved
Citizens of heaven
Part of God's story
Companions of Christ
Children of Mary.

Or...
We are just little people
With little struggles
Self sufficient
Self enclosed
Self imploding

Leading little lives
And dying little deaths.

Lord, help us to see.
Amen.

II The Hands of Jesus

Our lives as followers of Jesus are more than about just ourselves. They are about following Jesus and His way of living. Many times in our daily preoccupations we forget this and we slip into self-centeredness and even selfishness.

We forget that we are part of a bigger picture – God’s picture. We are God’s people, and have God’s work to do in our everyday life.

Read John’s Gospel, Chapter 17...

Jesus last will and testament, given at the Last Supper.

Jesus tells us that this ‘new life’ of ours
means that we are in the world, but not of the world.

This does not mean that we leave our families, give up our jobs, forget about our hobbies, withdraw from our social activities or political activities, renounce our love of the arts.

No, ‘new life’ means that we live as God’s people in the midst of all of these things,

and we experience all of these things with God’s love in our hearts and in our lives...

I want to share a beautiful story that speaks of this.

I have used it many times before, but it bears repeating...

During the Second World War after the D Day invasion of France the American soldiers liberated a small French village on their way through

France. After the fighting the villagers came out into the village square to discover that the fighting had scarred their beautiful life sized statue of Jesus. It was covered with dirt, and had several bullet holes, along with other scratches. Worst of all, both of the hands of Christ had been blown off.

Some of the villagers suggested that they get a new statue.

Others suggested that they clean up the statue, but leave the bullet holes and the scars as a reminder of their blessed liberation. But they wanted to get a sculptor to make two new hands for the statue.

A third group suggested they clean up the statue and keep it as a reminder, but that they put no new hands on the statue.

To this day the life sized, scared statue of Jesus stands in the village square, with no hands. Below it is a plaque, which reads, "We are the hands of Christ."

Conclusion...

As we continue with this Eucharist we pray:

Lord, make me a channel of your peace

Where there is hatred let me bring your love

Where there is injury, pardon

And where there is doubt, true faith in you

Where there is despair, let me bring hope

Where there is darkness, only light

And where there is sadness, only joy

O Master, grant that I may never seek so much to be consoled

As to console

To be understood as to understand,

To be loved as to love with all my soul

That's what 'new life' is all about.

From the Desk of Donald Ware, C.P.

Loving Jesus – and telling Him that each day,
and offering each day to Jesus,
trying to realize that we walk each day with Jesus...
and then bring Jesus in our world.
Amen.