



Prophet Elisha and the Shunammite woman on Mt. Carmel by Gerard van den Eckhout, CCO

July 2, 2023

Written by
THE
FAITHFUL
DISCIPLE

Thirteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time

2 Kgs 4: 8-11, 14-16a | Rom 6: 3-4, 8-11 | Mt 10:37-42

GROW AS A DISCIPLE | PRAY, STUDY, ENGAGE, SERVE

In today's first reading, the Shunammite woman recognized that Elisha was "a holy man of God." She and her husband then went on to provide Elisha with hospitality and lodging, and she was rewarded with a son. But how did she recognize Elisha as the holy prophet that he was? Recognition, or lack of it, is a recurrent theme in Scripture – from Mary Magdalene not recognizing the risen Lord at the tomb to the disciples not recognizing Jesus on the road to Emmaus. In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus himself encouraged his listeners to learn to recognize "false prophets" because they bear bad fruit. What do we need to open our eyes to and recognize today? Perhaps the realization that Jesus' life and teachings always point us to life – life with him and in him, on earth and for eternity. As members of the body of Christ, let us ask the Holy Spirit to fill us with his love so that we may bear good fruit and always choose the road that leads to that life.

GO EVANGELIZE

PRAYER, INVITATION, WITNESS, ACCOMPANIMENT

"Whoever finds his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for my sake will find it." Perhaps we should consider these words from Jesus in today's Gospel a challenge. Yes, we know that faithful discipleship comes with demands. But "losing our life"? I like to think of it as going "all in" in our response to Jesus. Investing the most we can in our relationship with Jesus means recognizing that he is the way and the truth and the life. And then we must act upon that. How? Put God first in your life. Serve him before all else. Let our relationship with Christ be like the frame that holds a building up – let it define us, strengthen us, and shape us. And may it allow us to recognize his loving presence in each moment of our lives.

ACTION The summer months are hot in the northern hemisphere, and traveling, running errands, and doing things for oneself can be difficult for those who are adversely affected by the heat. Take a look around you – at your neighbors or even those who are part of your daily circle of encounters – and be intentional at recognizing who they are (a child of God) and what their needs might be. Offer specific assistance to them related to that need, as the Shunammite woman and her husband did for Elisha.