

Thirteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time

Sunday Mass Readings & Spiritual Leadership Guide

June 28, 2026 · Lectionary 97

Sunday Mass Readings

FIRST READING

2 Kings 4:8–11, 14–16a

One day Elisha came to Shunem, where there was a woman of influence, who urged him to dine with her. Afterward, whenever he passed by, he used to stop there to dine. So she said to her husband, “I know that Elisha is a holy man of God. Since he visits us often, let us arrange a little room on the roof and furnish it for him with a bed, table, chair, and lamp, so that when he comes to us he can stay there.” Sometime later Elisha arrived and stayed in the room overnight.

Later Elisha asked, “Can something be done for her?” His servant Gehazi answered, “Yes! She has no son, and her husband is getting on in years.” Elisha said, “Call her.” When the woman had been called and stood at the door, Elisha promised, “This time next year you will be fondling a baby son.”

RESPONSORIAL PSALM

Psalm 89:2–3, 16–17, 18–19

R. Forever I will sing the goodness of the Lord.

The promises of the LORD I will sing forever, through all generations my mouth shall proclaim your faithfulness. For you have said, “My kindness is established forever;” in heaven you have confirmed your faithfulness.

R. Forever I will sing the goodness of the Lord.

Blessed the people who know the joyful shout; in the light of your countenance, O LORD, they walk. At your name they rejoice all the day, and through your justice they are exalted.

R. Forever I will sing the goodness of the Lord.

You are the splendor of their strength, and by your favor our horn is exalted. For to the LORD belongs our shield, and the Holy One of Israel, our king.

R. Forever I will sing the goodness of the Lord.

*Men Helping Men Step Up and Become Better Spiritual Leaders
by Following Christ and the Teachings of His Church*



SECOND READING

Romans 6:3–4, 8–11

Brothers and sisters: Are you unaware that we who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were indeed buried with him through baptism into death, so that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might live in newness of life.

If, then, we have died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him. We know that Christ, raised from the dead, dies no more; death no longer has power over him. As to his death, he died to sin once and for all; as to his life, he lives for God. Consequently, you too must think of yourselves as dead to sin and living for God in Christ Jesus.

GOSPEL

Matthew 10:37–42

Alleluia Verse (1 Peter 2:9): You are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation; announce the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light.

Jesus said to his apostles: “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. Whoever finds his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for my sake will find it.

“Whoever receives you receives me, and whoever receives me receives the one who sent me. Whoever receives a prophet because he is a prophet will receive a prophet’s reward, and whoever receives a righteous man because he is a righteous man will receive a righteous man’s reward. And whoever gives only a cup of cold water to one of these little ones to drink because the little one is a disciple—amen, I say to you, he will surely not lose his reward.”

All readings sourced from USCCB, Lectionary 97¹.

¹United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB), Lectionary 97.

<https://bible.usccb.org/bible/readings/062826.cfm>

Reflection

The Shunammite woman does not wait for Elisha to ask for anything. She sees a need—a holy man of God with no place to rest—and she acts. She furnishes a room. She creates space for the sacred. And without seeking a reward, she receives one: a son she had given up hoping for. Radical hospitality, offered freely, becomes the occasion for a miracle she could not have imagined.

The Gospel frames this same dynamic in stark terms. Jesus does not call his disciples to a comfortable faith. He calls them to take up a cross, to lose the life they are clinging to, and in doing so, to find the life they were made for. The leader who gives even a cup of cold water in Christ's name will not lose their reward. Paul grounds it all theologically: baptism is a death and a resurrection. We have already died to the old way of living. We are called to live, right now, as people raised with Christ—dead to sin, alive to God.

Leadership Principles

PRINCIPLE 1

Create Space for the Sacred

The Shunammite woman furnished a room for Elisha without being asked (2 Kgs 4:10). Great leaders are attentive to what is needed before it is requested. They create environments—physical, relational, spiritual—where God's work can take root and grow.

PRINCIPLE 2

Lead from Death to Life, Not from Fear of Loss

"Whoever loses his life for my sake will find it" (Mt 10:39). Those who are unwilling to risk comfort, reputation, or control will ultimately lose what they were trying to protect. Those who give freely—their time, authority, and resources—discover that the Kingdom logic of self-giving always multiplies.

PRINCIPLE 3

Receive Others as You Would Receive Christ

"Whoever receives you receives me" (Mt 10:40). How you treat the people under your care—especially the least visible—is how they treat Christ himself. Dignity, attentiveness, and welcome are not soft skills; they are theological commitments.

PRINCIPLE 4

Small Acts of Faithfulness Carry Eternal Weight

A cup of cold water given in Christ's name will not lose its reward (Mt 10:42). We as men are often tempted to overvalue the dramatic and undervalue the ordinary. Faithful, quiet service done with love is never invisible to God and is often what sustains a community most deeply.

PRINCIPLE 5

Live as People Already Raised

Paul calls believers to think of themselves as "dead to sin and living for God in Christ Jesus" (Rom 6:11). Spiritual leaders do not lead from the old life of fear, self-protection, and scarcity. They lead from resurrection—from the freedom, generosity, and hope of those who know death has already been defeated.

Discussion Questions

QUESTION 1

The Shunammite woman recognized Elisha as “a holy man of God” and responded by creating a space for him (2 Kgs 4:9–10). Who in your community—a leader, a servant, a quiet faithful person—deserves to be seen and supported in a way they currently are not? What would it look like to create that space for them?

QUESTION 2

“Whoever loses his life for my sake will find it” (Mt 10:39). What is the thing you are most afraid to lose in your life — your reputation, your authority, your comfort? How might God be inviting you to release it in order to live more freely?

QUESTION 3

Paul says we are to think of ourselves as “dead to sin and living for God” (Rom 6:11). What old habit, assumption, or fear keeps reasserting itself in your daily activities? What would it look like to treat that as something you have already died to?

QUESTION 4

Jesus says that even a cup of cold water given to a disciple will not lose its reward (Mt 10:42). What small, ordinary act of care or service have you been dismissing as “not enough”? How does this passage reframe the value of ordinary faithfulness?

QUESTION 5

“Whoever receives you receives me” (Mt 10:40). Think of the people who you come into contact with — your family, your parish, your community. If Christ is truly present in how you show up for them, what might need to change about the way you engage, listen, or serve?

Closing Action

A concrete, personal response drawn from the readings this week:

This week, identify one person in your life who needs a “room on the roof”—someone whose ministry, growth, or wellbeing would flourish if you simply created space for them. Take one concrete step: arrange a meeting, offer a resource, make an introduction, or clear an obstacle. Do it without waiting to be asked, and without expecting recognition. Then pay attention to what God does next (2 Kgs 4:8–11; Mt 10:42).

“Whoever gives only a cup of cold water to one of these little ones—he will surely not lose his reward.” — Matthew 10:42

Closing Prayer

Lord Jesus, you call us to take up our cross and follow you—not as an act of resignation, but as an act of trust. Teach us to lead as people who have already died and been raised with you: free from the fear of loss, free from the hunger for recognition, free to give a cup of cold water in your name and call it enough.

Give us eyes to see the holy in the ordinary—the Elisha passing by, the little one who needs water, the person who simply needs a room prepared. May we be known as leaders who receive others as we would receive you, and who furnish space for your presence to dwell among those we serve.

We ask this through Christ, who was dead and is alive, and who lives and reigns with the Father and the Holy Spirit, God, forever and ever. Amen.

“Forever I will sing the goodness of the Lord.” — Psalm 89:2