

Thirteenth Sunday in ordinary time

A priest is in the confessional and a penitent comes.

-You're not from this parish, are you? I haven't seen you before.

-No, Father, I'm a circus artist who just arrived.

-And what do you do in the circus?

-I am mountebank.

-And what is that?

-Wait for a demonstration.

The man stands up and starts somersaulting and prancing above the banks of the church.

Two grannies are waiting to confess, and they see him and one says:

-Better come back when the other priest comes, that this gives very difficult penances!

Dear Friends,

Happy Independence Day weekend. Let us be grateful to God for this beautiful nation where we have all freedom and peace.

The Liturgy asks us to reflect on hospitality and being generous. We are invited to reflect on the gifts that come to us when we practice hospitality with no strings attached.

There was a survey taken in 2022 about how people are generous in general. They found out that Baby Boomers (1946-1964) and Gen X (1965-1980) generations primarily associated financial giving with generosity. Millennials (1981-1996) most strongly associated it with gifts, and Gen Z (1997-2012) associates generosity with emotional / relational support.

The first reading from the Book of Kings tells us how a woman was so open to receive somebody, who she later found out was a holy person, with open arms with no expectation. It was her initiative to invite Elisha for dinner and prepare a room for him to stay. Elisha offered her a gift of gratitude. His prophecy of a child for her is a huge gift of her generosity.

In the Gospel, Jesus tells us to receive the people with open hearts and minds. Hospitality is being open and welcoming to others or helping people feel accepted without judgement.

We need to be hospitable and generous: Hospitality means acknowledging the presence of God in others and serving Him in them, especially those in whom we least expect to find Him. We, as individuals and as a community, are to look for opportunities to be

hospitable—and, of course, there are plenty of ways of offering hospitality. Maybe hospitality is offered through a kind word to a stranger – or even a smile. A kind smile or a “hello” to someone waiting with us in a grocery line may be the only kindness that person encounters all day. We become fully alive as Christians through the generous giving of ourselves. What is more important than the sending of checks for charitable causes is the giving of ourselves to people, primarily in the way we think about them, for from that spring will flow the ways we speak to them and about them, forgive their failings, encourage them, show them respect, console them, and offer them help. Such generosity reflects warmth radiating from the very love of God.