

OCTOBER 8, 2017



TWENTY-SEVENTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME



ISAIAH 5:1-7

PSALM 88:9, 12, 13-14, 15-16, 19-20

PHILIPPIANS 4:6-9

MATTHEW 21:33-43

REFLECTION

One summer, my youth group traveled to rural Appalachia for a week-long mission trip. When we arrived at our work site on Monday morning, we were greeted by a short woman with long, silver hair. She introduced herself as Miss Patty and proceeded to give us a tour of her modest home, pointing out the badly damaged floors and walls, and explaining how hard the winters were since the house was poorly insulated. Eyes welling with tears, she told us how she had sought repair assistance from several local organizations over the course of the last year, all with no success. One day, Miss Patty decided to stop searching for assistance. She said a prayer to God: "Lord, I am grateful for the home I have, and if it's your will that this is how I live, then I will trust in you." The very next day, a representative from our volunteer organization showed up on her doorstep asking how we might be able to help her. By the end of the summer, she had new insulation, flooring, walls, and gutters. But in the midst of it all, in good times and bad, Miss Patty dwelled on the good in her life and offered God deep gratitude for the gifts she had, just as today's Second Reading describes. Gratitude and trust often go hand in hand. When difficult experiences flood our lives, it is often easy to say, "I'm in pain, God! I'm afraid! I'm lost! Where are you?" Sometimes it seems as if God is nowhere to be found, or as if God has given up on us entirely. But in our darkest moments, it can be helpful to look back and recall with gratitude the gifts God has given us in the past. We are reminded that God has been faithful. We are reminded that God has been present in the midst of our trials. Just so, God is faithful *now*. God is present *now*, even if our pain and fear blinds us to that reality. We can begin to put our trust in God again, and look with hope to the future.

ACTION

Make a list of ten blessings you are grateful for, and carry this list with you in your pocket, purse, or wallet this week. If you begin to feel anxious or find yourself dwelling on the negative, take a look at your list and say a prayer of thanksgiving. Consider making a new list every week.

JOURNALING QUESTIONS

- Can you think of a difficult time when you had to place your trust in God? Was it challenging for you? Why?
- How might a spirit of gratitude help you trust God through your struggles and challenges?