

# 10<sup>th</sup> Sunday of the Year A

*What I want is mercy, not sacrifice.  
And indeed I did not come to call the virtuous,  
but sinners. (Mt 9:13)*



## First Reading

*Hosea 6:3-6*

Let us set ourselves to know the Lord; that he will come is as certain as the dawn, his judgement will rise like the light, he will come to us as showers come, like spring rains watering the earth.

What am I to do with you, Ephraim? What am I to do with you, Judah? This love of yours is like a morning cloud, like the dew that quickly disappears. This is why I have torn them to pieces by the prophets, why I slaughtered them with the words from my mouth, since what I want is love, not sacrifice; knowledge of God, not holocausts.

## Second Reading

*Romans 4:18-25*

Though it seemed Abraham's hope could not be fulfilled, he hoped and he believed, and through doing so he did become the father of many nations exactly as he had been promised: Your descendants will be as many as the stars. Even the thought that his body was past fatherhood – he was about a hundred years old – and Sarah too old to become a mother, did not shake his belief. Since God had promised it, Abraham refused either to deny it or even to doubt it, but drew strength from faith and gave glory to God, convinced that God had power to do what he had promised. This is the faith that was "considered as justifying him". Scripture however does not refer only to him but to us as well when it says that his faith was thus "considered"; our faith too will be "considered" if we believe in him who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead, Jesus who was put to death for our sins and raised to life to justify us.

As Jesus was walking on he saw a man named Matthew sitting by the customs house, and he said to him, "Follow me." And he got up and followed him.

While he was at dinner in the house it happened that a number of tax collectors and sinners came to sit at the table with Jesus and his disciples. When the Pharisees saw this, they said to his disciples, "Why does your master eat with tax collectors and sinners?" When he heard this he replied, "It is not the healthy who need the doctor, but the sick. Go and learn the meaning of the words: What I want is mercy, not sacrifice. And indeed I did not come to call the virtuous, but sinners."

## Meditation

*Abraham was an old man. He had no ordinary hope of fathering a son. Yet God chose him to be the father of many nations. Matthew was a tax collector. He was despised by his country's people as a collaborator with the hated Roman government. Yet Jesus chose him to be a leader of the Church. Old men and tax collectors: the choice falls in strange places.*

*Jesus himself explains. He has not come to call the self-righteous. They believe at heart they have no need of God since they have done an admirable job of assuring their own salvation by their self-made goodness. Jesus has come to call the sick, the sinners, the old men and the tax collectors, who know their need all too well. They have no illusions about their inability to spin the world as it should be spun. The wisdom of God's choices bears itself out in the response. Abraham, knowing he has no hope of sons, places all his trust in the God who promises them. Matthew, and all the outcasts at his table, knowing they have no hope of justification, place all their trust in the Lord who offers it. The Pharisees turn away. Today's readings seem to set before us two questions. They ask us first with whom we sit at table. How do we choose those to whom we minister with our time, our attention, our presence? Is it those who are "deserving" or those who are in need? The readings ask us, too, if we will be among the chosen. Do we believe ourselves to be self-sufficient or do we know our need?*