

For Real
a meditation based on
Ruth 2

What would the world be like if we greeted each other the way the field workers and Boaz do? *Just then Boaz arrived from Bethlehem and greeted the harvesters, "The LORD be with you!" "The LORD bless you!" they called back*(Ruth 2:4). We usually greet each by saying, "Hi!" or "hello!" or the always ready, "How are you?" Here, in a greeting of all things, an ordinary, every-day occurrence, nothing earth shattering. It shows that these people, who have experienced the kindness of God, desire to bring God into conversation as much as possible, to remind – that is, to bring to mind again – that God is real. That the LORD IS with us, always; even in the difficulties life brings us; that the LORD is very busy blessing us, with every blessing in Christ Jesus!

But is this interchange for real? Do they really mean, "*The LORD be with you?*" Are they serious when they say, "*The LORD bless you?*" Is Ruth for real here? Or is she "scheming," and "trying to butter up" Boaz (Edward F. Campbell) with her nice words, supposedly spoken in humility? Is Boaz for real? Can someone really be that kind, that protective, that generous? Can people really make a difference in the way it is shown here?

The story is told by describing "the extra, the more than required" (E.F.C.). The extra, the more than required comes not first of all from people. It comes first of all from God. Three times in these verses we read of blessings in the name of the LORD; blessings on persons, blessings from people (the Hebrews) to people (of Moab, the nations). They come directly from the LORD to his people; as promised by the LORD to Abram. "*I will bless you.*" "*All peoples on earth will be blessed through you*" (Gen 12:2,3). They come when the LORD's people receive from the LORD himself the undeserved kindness he shows us. Received – when? When we practice this. *I call on you, O God, for you will answer me; give ear to me and hear my prayer. Show the wonders of your great love, you who save by your right hand those who take refuge in you from their foes. Keep me as the apple of your eye; hide me in the shadow of your wings* (Ps 17:6-8).

The extra, the more than required comes not first of all from people. It comes first of all from God. His kindness shown to us, undeserved. *What, then, shall we say in response to this? If God is for us, who can be against us? He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him for us all – how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things?* (Rom 8:31-32). Talk about the extra! Talk about the more than required! This is absolutely astonishing! God is not only for us; he is not only "with" us (as the greeting goes); he is in us, working something that changes everything, beginning from the inside. So we can be for real. So we can really make a difference through the God and Father of

Jesus.