

Cycle B 32nd Sunday in Ordinary Time

Reading 1 1 KGS 17:10-16

In those days, Elijah the prophet went to Zarephath. As he arrived at the entrance of the city, a widow was gathering sticks there; he called out to her, "Please bring me a small cupful of water to drink." She left to get it, and he called out after her, "Please bring along a bit of bread." She answered, "As the LORD, your God, lives, I have nothing baked; there is only a handful of flour in my jar and a little oil in my jug. Just now I was collecting a couple of sticks, to go in and prepare something for myself and my son; when we have eaten it, we shall die." Elijah said to her, "Do not be afraid. Go and do as you propose. But first make me a little cake and bring it to me. Then you can prepare something for yourself and your son. For the LORD, the God of Israel, says, 'The jar of flour shall not go empty, nor the jug of oil run dry, until the day when the LORD sends rain upon the earth.'" She left and did as Elijah had said. She was able to eat for a year, and he and her son as well; the jar of flour did not go empty, nor the jug of oil run dry, as the LORD had foretold through Elijah.

Responsorial Psalm PS 146:7, 8-9, 9-10

R. (1b) Praise the Lord, my soul!

The LORD keeps faith forever, secures justice for the oppressed, gives food to the hungry. The LORD sets captives free.

R. Praise the Lord, my soul!

The LORD gives sight to the blind; the LORD raises up those who were bowed down. The LORD loves the just; the LORD protects strangers.

R. Praise the Lord, my soul!

The fatherless and the widow he sustains, but the way of the wicked he thwarts. The LORD shall reign forever; your God, O Zion, through all generations. Alleluia.

R. Praise the Lord, my soul!

Reading 2 HEB 9:24-28

Christ did not enter into a sanctuary made by hands, a copy of the true one, but heaven itself, that he might now appear before God on our behalf. Not that he might offer himself repeatedly, as the high priest enters each year into the sanctuary with blood that is not his own; if that were so, he would have had to suffer repeatedly from the foundation of the world. But now once for all he has appeared at the end of the ages to take away sin by his sacrifice. Just as it is appointed that human beings die once, and after this the judgment, so also Christ, offered once to take away the sins of many, will appear a second time, not to take away sin but to bring salvation to those who eagerly await him.

Gospel MK 12:38-44

He sat down opposite the treasury and observed how the crowd put money into the treasury. Many rich people put in large sums. A poor widow also came and put in two small coins worth a few cents. Calling his disciples to himself, he said to them, "Amen, I say to you, this poor widow put in more than all the other contributors to the treasury. For they have all contributed from their surplus wealth, but she, from her poverty, has contributed all she had, her whole livelihood."

20 years ago in June 2004, we were in Rome Italy for our son Christopher's and daughter-in-law Sonia's wedding. Sonia was born in Rome, and when she was 5 or 6 years old, she chose the church where she wanted to be married: Santa Maria in Aracoeli. It's between the Roman Forum and the white marble monument of the tomb of Italy's unknown soldier known as the "Wedding Cake." At the wedding reception, one of Sonia's uncles asked if he could say a few words. He told us that he wanted us to know how much Italy loves America. "In 3 weeks," he said, "it's the 60th anniversary of the liberation of Rome by the American Army! I was there when the American tanks rumbled into Rome...you have no idea how much we love America...you freed us from the Nazis!" I'm telling you the hair stood up on the back of my neck that day!

As President Ronald Reagan once said, *"Freedom is never more than one generation away from extinction. We don't pass it to our children in their bloodstream. It must be fought for, protected, and handed on for them to do the same."*

This Monday we have an extraordinary opportunity for unity in this time of disunity, to be One Nation under God as we celebrate Veterans Day. I am honored and privileged to ask our Veterans to stand as we pray for them:

Dear Jesus, we ask your blessings for all who have served their country in the armed forces defending freedom and safety. May their call to service continue in their lives in many positive ways. We ask for healing of the Veterans who have been wounded, in body and soul, in conflicts around the globe. We pray especially for the men and women, who are still coming home with injured bodies and traumatized spirits. Help us bring your love to them Lord Jesus. Help us to pray for them when they cannot pray. Have mercy on all Veterans from past wars. Bring peace to their souls and peace to the regions where they were deployed.

I want to recognize another group who too often are overlooked...our unsung heroes who endured loneliness and trauma, and greatly sacrificed in support of their spouses and parents and siblings ...would the families of our Veterans please stand up as well.

Lord Jesus, we know our Veterans don't just go to war, but they also make the peace...as Pope Francis prayed at Assisi: "...[may] *the world become a family of people. May we carry out our responsibility of building an authentic peace, attentive to the real needs of all individuals and people, capable of preventing conflicts through a cooperation that triumphs over hate and overcomes barriers through encounter and dialogue. Nothing is lost when we effectively enter into dialogue. Nothing is impossible if we turn to God in prayer. Everyone can be an artisan of peace.*" Lord Jesus, give us strength to change the world...make us weary of fighting and make us affirm the life of every human being. Hear our prayer, Lord Jesus, we beg you, hear our prayer.

Dear Veterans and families, may God Bless you + Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Amen
[Applause]....Please be seated.

For me Veterans Day has a bittersweet shroud of seriousness and a sadness about it. I can't help but think about my friends and family who fought in wars, and died or came home wounded. I see flags everywhere: in yards, in parades and in cemeteries. I see proud Veterans and your families, and I know we don't fully appreciate what you went through....or what you may still be going through. Today I want us to try to lift that pall of foreboding sadness and memories better left unsaid. I want us to celebrate this Veterans Day with the faith and hope in our hearts called out in today's Scripture readings. We salute our Veterans and your families unselfish service defending freedom and our safety. In many ways your self-sacrifice is proof that God's kingdom has begun.

On this Sunday I'm reminded that one question you and I face is this: "*What do we give God?*" Do we give Him what's left over after we've taken care of everything else? Or do we give God what we're living for, with all our hearts? We have much, and we can give

God much. We can give God our trust and our dependence upon Him. Take our daily efforts, for instance, are we trying to accomplish our purpose or God's purpose? They can be the same, you know. We can make God's purpose our purpose. Caring for the ones we love is giving our lives to God. Providing for others is making God's purpose our purpose. Working for peace, responding to hatred with love, working for justice and fairness in our world, protecting freedom, and self-sacrifice are all about giving our lives to God.

Let's be clear about something. The Gospel today is not about God being interested in our money. He has all the riches He will ever need. No, God wants more than our money. God wants us. He wants to be part of our daily life. He wants to be what we depend on each day. He wants to be what we live for....with all our hearts!

Our giving to God could be giving Him back what's already His in the first place. But what about giving God our hearts like the widows in today's readings? Ah, that's something else...that's an added dimension! The gift from our hearts is what He's looking for. It's our gift to Him each time we pray. And when we gift Him our love, when we give Him our lives, our interests and purpose, what He will give back to us cannot be measured. We can have hearts and souls as trusting, as full of faith, as loving and as generous as those widows whose stories we have just heard!

God loves us so much that He wants to be united with us forever....He promises to strengthen us, to be with us and to raise us to new life. We can give our lives in service to others with our whole hearts, even when we could face death...just ask a Veteran. Let us again salute our Veterans and their families unselfish service defending freedom and our safety, back home and around the world. In many ways their self-sacrifice is proof that God's kingdom has begun....right here...right now...One Nation under God. Amen