

Parish Priest's Corner

Self Sacrifice and Dependence on God

My dear friends in Christ,

Today's gospel reading is one of those passages from the scriptures that might appear unrealistic. How could the poor widow give away all of her meager survival income? How could she empty her life savings? What was her plans for the future? Was she not thinking about retirement? As much as all these questions are important, they are not per say what Jesus is calling our attention to today. Jesus draws a contrast between giving some measures out of our abundance versus willingness to self-sacrifice and dependence on God. Self-sacrifice is the ultimate value of Christian faith.

The same lesson can be grasped from the First Reading. The widow from Zarephath was outside her home trying to figure out how to survive. And we can agree that the last thing she needed was for anyone to add to her burden. But here comes Elijah. We do not know if the widow who was gathering sticks would have recognized that Elijah was the famous prophet. It is likely that she would not have – there was no TV or Internet back then to spread images of famous people. But even if she did, she had very little reason to comply with his request for a drink of water. A drought and a famine had devastated the country, and she and her only son were on the verge of starvation. She was suffering intensely, she had grave problems of her own, and she had plenty of reasons to lash out at someone who ignored her suffering and asked favors of her.

It is in times of hardship and stress that our true character shines out. And in the case of this widow, her true character was truly courageous. She left aside her own work when Elijah asked her for a favor, loving her neighbor as herself. And when he asked more than she could give, she did not become vindictive or angry, but simply stated the facts. She was a woman who recognized her own dependence on God, and as a result she was able to be generous towards others who were in need, without getting tangled up in self-centered complications. She embodied self-sacrifice, which is the ultimate value of Christian life. Unfortunately, in our day and age, value is most often measured by money, and generosity, by how much of it we sacrifice. Self-sacrifice is not limited by any means to financial resources. Sparing our time and God-given gifts and talents in service to others are forms of self-sacrifice.

Special Announcements

New Youth Ministry Coordinator: For the past thirteen years, our parish youth ministry coordinator, Mike Hennick, served to bring many children and youth of our parish closer to Christ. Mike accepted this position and served our parish over the years without asking for anything in return. He committed not only his time, but also his talent and treasure. Mike's efforts paid off as one of his former students, Josh Freitag will now take over from him as our new youth ministry coordinator. I am profoundly grateful to Mike for helping many young people in our parish to encounter Christ and for serving our faith community. I also welcome Josh Freitag to this new role. Josh is a blessing to our parish. I ask all of us to provide him with all the support he needs. If your children and/or grandchildren in middle school or high school are not part of our parish youth ministry, they are truly missing out, please let Josh know and he would be happy to work with you.

Our Wednesday night dinner last week was spectacular. I thank Johanna Hennick for sponsoring the event and preparing the dinner.

This coming Wednesday, the Altar Society will be hosting our annual Thanksgiving dinner. All are welcome.

May God's abundant graces be with you this week.

--Fr. Anthony Ahamefule