

2021 November 07

## Thirty-second Sunday in Ordinary Time

### Readings:

**First:** 1 Kings 17.10-16, "Elijah, the prophet set out and went to Zarephath." (10a)

**The Psalm:** 146, "The Lord sets the prisoners free." (7c)

**Second:** Hebrew 9.24-28, "Christ did not enter a sanctuary made by human hands." (24a)

**The Gospel:** Mark 12.38-44, "A poor widow came and put in two small copper coins" (42)

*"All she had to live on"*

On the one hand God is punishing the people with a severe famine for the apostasy and evil doing. At the same time, he nurtures and preserves those whom he wants to be his stewards to deliver the very same people and their progeny later. There is an in-built scheme of deliverance in all the punishments of God. God's punishments are never to destroy totally but to restore and to rejuvenate. It is always a surgical operation! We find these with Elijah.

Jesus in his earthly life was a close observer of people the happenings around. He looks into the mind and heart of people. If he were to be so in his earthly life, how much more he sees and observes the minute details that happen on earth, in heaven, in the underworld, and in the remotest corners of human mind! Today in the gospel he looks at two happenings in the temple, first, how the pharisees dress up and exhibit themselves to be seen, honored and celebrated, and secondly, the poor widow putting two small copper coins into the treasury. His observation about the widow is that she put into the hand of God everything she had! Jesus also pronounces judgment on these two groups about the kind of reward each will get from the heavenly Father. The poor widow put all that she had for her living.

We may think that she could do it because it was not much, not significant, and it might fetch her hardly anything. Hence, she could do it willingly and 'carelessly!' But people with much possessions such giving all is not practical, not prudent, not warranted! As ordinary human beings we find some of the demands of Jesus too impossible to meet. Look at what he says in Luke 14. 26-27 & 33, "*None of you can become my disciple if you do not give up all your possessions*", a contradiction that Jesus who taught us to love all now telling to hate people intimate to us. And them to give up everything and be in the street!

Ours are not just small possessions as the poor widow threw into the treasury. She could have done that because she was already in the street or on the edge. But we are not. We have many possessions and loved ones. How can we throw them all and go empty-handed and deprived? We find many saints and followers of Jesus who were rich and even famous. How did they apply to themselves these precepts of Jesus? The answer is that you can have all these and still fulfill the demands of Jesus. You are here not the owner but only stewards and use everything as a steward. You can love all these people and possessions, but your God should be the first in your love life. By letting go of your possessions, remember, you are abandoning yourself not into a bottomless pit but into the strong hands of God. With God you have everything, and without nothing. Jesus means this in the above gospel passage.

*Fr. George*