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Sunday: THIRTY-SECOND SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME
Date: November 8, 2009
Year: B
The readings: [1 Kgs 17:10-6; Heb. 9:24-8; Mk. 12:38-44]
The message: Blessed are those who persevere.
Prepared by: THE CATHOLIC DOORS MINISTRY
Total words: 1072

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**** The readings follow the sermon.**

Blessed be the widow who placed her complete trust in the Divine Providence of God. Blessed are those who persevere in their living faith. Good morning my brothers and sisters in Christ. I hope that you all had a wonderful past week and that this coming week will bring you many more joys in the peace of the Lord Jesus.

Have any of you noticed that all three readings spoke of widows? In the First Reading, there is the widow who shared the last of her food with Elijah. In the Gospel, there is the poor widow who gave all that she had to live on. In the Second Reading, although the word 'widow' is not used, we perceive that the Holy Catholic Church that Jesus was instituting on earth during His ministry, it was widowed when He offered Himself as a sacrifice to remove sin from the world.

In all three cases, a great sacrifice was made. In the First Reading, the widow who fed Elijah, she sacrificed all what she had for herself and her son. In the Second Reading, Jesus sacrificed Himself, He who was the only Begotten Son of God and in who the fullness of God was pleased to dwell bodily [Col. 1:19, 2:9] In the Gospel Reading, the widow sacrificed her last two small copper coins.

In all three cases, they all trusted in God the Father. The widow who fed Elijah trusted in the Lord God of Israel to provide her future needs so she and her son would not die of starvation. Jesus trusted in God the Father to raise Him from the dead. The poor widow who gave her last coins trusted in Yahweh to provide for her future needs.

And in all three cases, each and everyone of them were blessed according to their sacrifice. The widow and her son never went hungry because the jar of meal was not emptied, neither did the jug of oil fail. Jesus was glorified by God the Father. "When He had made purification for sins, He sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high, having become as much superior to angels as the Name He has inherited is more excellent than theirs." [Heb. 1:3b-4] The poor widow, in the presence of God incarnated through Jesus Christ, she gave all what she had to Yahweh, her action having been recorded in the Holy Scriptures so it will be remembered during all the days of the world.

God always rewards those who persevere in their living faith. No one goes by unnoticed. If you are proud, you will be noticed. If you are humble, you will also be noticed. If you are proud like the scribes who walked around in long robes so all would greet them with respect in the market places, and to have the best seats in the synagogues and places of honour at banquet, then you too, like the scribes, will be noticed and receive greater condemnation. If you are humble like the poor widow who's name no one knows, then you will be noticed, God will raise you and reward you according to your sacrifice.

Today's Second Reading tells us that Jesus died once for all time and for all people when He

made His perfect sacrifice to remove sin. His Divine Sacrifice as the Lamb of God on the Holy Cross put an end to the first age, the days of the Old Testament and the Covenant of the Law. His Divine Sacrifice as the Lamb of God opened the new and last age in which we now belong, the days of the New Testament and the New Covenant of grace.

When Jesus returns at the end of this last age, it will not be to deal with sin by sacrificing Himself again, but to judge the living and the dead. It will be to collect the saints who have persevered in their living faith and who are awaiting for the arrival of the Lord Jesus.

We must never forget that God told Abraham that He is the God of the living, not of the dead. [Mt. 22:32] The living are those who shine as lights in the world, those who shine in love towards God and their brothers and sisters.

My brothers and sisters, there is no room in Heaven for those who are indifferent, for those who meet the minimum requirements of Christian life so they will be 'acceptable' to God. The Book of Revelations tells us, "I know your works; you are neither cold nor hot. I wish that you were either cold or hot. So, because you are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I am about to spit you out of my mouth." [Rev. 3:15-6]

Those who are lukewarm are those who say, "I only go to Church on Sunday because weekdays are not mandatory." They are those who say, "I only give \$ 5.00 a week in the collection plate on Sunday because that is all that the others give." They are those who say, "I do not read the Bible, nor do Bible studies, because I know enough about the Scriptures." They are those who say, "I am not getting involved on the Parish Council because I have other worldly pleasures to attend to."

Regarding such answers, St. Paul says, "Present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your minds, so that you may discern what is the will of God - what is good and acceptable and perfect." [Rom. 12:1]

The widow who fed Elijah, she knew the will of God. The poor widow who gave her last two coins, she knew the will of God. The Lord Jesus, when He sacrificed Himself on the Holy Cross for our sins, He knew the will of God. All three, they embraced a spiritual mind and did what was good, acceptable and perfect in the eyes of God.

This week, let us reflect upon our commitment as members of the Church. Let us assess if we are among the blessed who persevere in their living faith. If we can presently count ourselves among those who will be spit out of the mouth of the Lord because we are indifferent to our sanctification, then, let us embrace the grace of God and the purifying power of the Holy Spirit so we may become Christlike to qualify as children of God.

The readings...

[The readings were taken from the New Revised Standard Version of the Bible (C) 1989 Division of Christian Education of the National Council of the Church of Christ in the United States of America.]

First Reading...

"Elijah, the prophet, set out and went to Zarephath. When he came to the gate of the town, a woman was there gathering sticks; he called to her and said, 'Bring me a little water in a vessel, so that I may drink.' As she was going to bring it, he called to her and said, 'Bring me a morsel of bread in your hand.'

But she said, 'As the Lord your God lives, I have nothing baked, only a handful of meal in a jar, and a little oil in a jug; I am now gathering a couple of sticks, so that I may go home and prepare it for myself and my son, that we may eat it, and die.'

Elijah said to her, 'Do not be afraid; go and do as you have said; but first make me a little cake of it and bring it to me, and afterwards make something for yourself and your son. For thus says the Lord God of Israel: 'The jar of meal will not be emptied and the jug of oil will not fail until the day that the Lord sends rain on the earth.'

She went and did as Elijah said, so that she as well as he and her household ate for many days. The jar of meal was not emptied, neither did the jug of oil fail, according to the word of the Lord that he spoke to Elijah." [1 Kgs 17:10-6]

Second Reading...

"Christ did not enter a sanctuary made by human hands, a mere copy of the true one, but he entered into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God on our behalf.

Nor was it to offer himself again and again, as the high priest enters the Holy Place year after year with blood that is not his own; for then he would have had to suffer again and again since the foundation of the world.

But as it is, Christ has appeared once for all at the end of the age to remove sin, by the sacrifice himself. And just as it is appointed for mortals to die once, and after that comes the judgment, so Christ, having been offered once to bear the sins of many, will appear a second time, not to deal with sin, but to save those who are eagerly waiting for him." [Heb. 9:24-8]

Gospel Reading...

"Jesus was teaching in the temple, and a large crowd was listening to him. He said, 'Beware of the scribes, who like to walk around in long robes, and to be greeted with respect in the marketplaces, and to have the best seats in the synagogues and places of honour at banquets! They devour widows' houses and for the sake of appearance say long prayers. They will receive the greater condemnation.'

Jesus sat down opposite the treasury, and watched the crowd putting money into the treasury. Many rich people put in large sums. A poor widow came and put in two small copper coins, which are worth a penny. Then he called his disciples and said to them, 'Truly I tell you, this poor widow has put in more than all those who are contributing to the treasury. For all of them have contributed out of their abundance; but she out of her poverty has put in everything she had, all she had to live on.' [Mk. 12:38-44]

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