

LOOKING TO SUNDAY®

Sunday, November 11, 2018

The Thirty-Second Sunday in Ordinary Time

This email, entitled Looking to Sunday®, focuses on one or more of the scripture readings for the coming Sunday. It prepares readers to hear God's Word at Mass and it offers a point of reflection to consider in the days leading to Sunday. Looking to Sunday is written by Father Tom Iwanowski.

THEIR MOTTO

Certain figures in the scriptures are associated with particular qualities.

Thomas the Apostle is known for his initial skepticism and doubt about the Resurrection of Jesus.

Martha is remembered for her busyness in the kitchen when Jesus comes to visit, while her sister Mary is celebrated for the undivided attention she gives to the Lord.

Paul is famous for his radical conversion to Christianity and his unwavering dedication to preaching the Gospel.

The Canaanite woman is recognized for her persistence and boldness as she asks Jesus to cure her demon-possessed daughter.

In this Sunday's readings we meet two widows who are famous for their generosity.

In the First Reading (1 Kings 17:10-16), we meet the widow of Zarephath who unselfishly uses her remaining oil and flour to prepare some food for the Prophet Elijah. As she tells the prophet, "Just now I was collecting a couple of sticks (for a fire), to go in and prepare something for myself and my son; when we have eaten it, we shall die."

In the Gospel (Mark 12:38-44), we meet another widow whose generosity knows no bounds. She donates her last coins to the Temple treasury. As Jesus observes "this poor widow put in more than all the other contributors to the treasury....she, from her poverty, has contributed all she had, her whole livelihood."

Both widows are models of generosity. They both gave all that they had. But perhaps there is another quality that we should associate with those two widows, and that quality is trust. It was their trust in God that allowed them to act with such generosity.

The widow of Zarephath put her trust in the assurance given by Elijah that if she fed him, she and her son would not starve. "Do not be afraid...For the LORD, the God of Israel, says, 'The jar of flour shall not go empty, nor the jug of oil run dry.'"

The widow at the Temple placed her trust in God's care for women like her. She remembered what she heard proclaimed from the sacred texts. "The LORD protects the resident alien, comes to the aid of the orphan and the widow, but thwarts the way of the wicked." (Psalm 146:9)

"For the LORD, your God ... executes justice for the orphan and the widow, and loves the resident alien, giving them food and clothing." (Deuteronomy 10:17-18)

It was trust in God that led both widows to be generous.

If we are to grow in generosity, perhaps the first thing we need to do is to put more trust in God's care for us rather than in our wealth.

It is interesting that the money we use reminds us of just that. All our coins and paper currency contain the phrase, "In God We Trust." Those words are the national motto of the United States.

The two widows in this Sunday's readings are associated with wonderful generosity, but even more so they are figures of trust. The words on our currency could well have been the motto and creed of the two widows we hear about this Sunday. "In God We Trust."

© 2018 Rev. Thomas B. Iwanowski