



Celebrate

Sunday, November 10, 2024
25th Sunday after Pentecost

Widows are visible everywhere in today's readings. Jesus denounces those scribes who pray impressive prayers but devour widows' houses. He commends the poor widow who in his view gave far more than the major donors. Jesus doesn't see her simply as an object of compassion or charity. She, like the widow of Zarephath who shares her last bit of food with Elijah, does something of great importance.

Prayer of the Day

O God, you show forth your almighty power chiefly by reaching out to us in mercy. Grant us the fullness of your grace, strengthen our trust in your promises, and bring all the world to share in the treasures that come through your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. **Amen.**

First Reading

1 Kings 17:8-16

This chapter begins the story of Elijah. God sends a drought on Israel because of the sins of King Ahab. This passage depicts God's saving acts not only on behalf of Elijah but also on behalf of those who are associated with the prophet, even a foreigner, the widow of Zarephath.

Then the word of the LORD came to [Elijah], saying, ⁹“Go now to Zarephath, which belongs to Sidon, and live there; for I have commanded a widow there to feed you.” ¹⁰So he set out and went to Zarephath. When he came to the gate of the town, a widow was there gathering sticks; he called to her and said, “Bring me a little water in a vessel, so that I may drink.” ¹¹As she was going to bring it, he called to her and said, “Bring me a morsel of bread in your hand.” ¹²But 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.” ¹³Elijah 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. ¹⁴For thus says the LORD the 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.” ¹⁵She went and did as Elijah said, so that she as well as he and her household ate for many days. ¹⁶The jar of meal was not emptied, neither did the jug of oil fail, according to the word of the LORD that he spoke by Elijah.



Hal-¹ lelujah!

Praise the LORD,¹ O my soul!

²I will praise the LORD as long¹ as I live;

I will sing praises to my God while I¹ have my being.

³Put not your¹ trust in rulers,

in mortals in whom there¹ is no help.

⁴When they breathe their last, they re-¹turn to earth,

and in that day¹ their thoughts perish. **R**

⁵Happy are they who have the God of Jacob¹ for their help,

whose hope is in the¹ LORD their God;

⁶who made heaven and earth, the seas, and all that¹ is in them;

who keeps promis-¹es forever;

⁷who gives justice to those who are oppressed,

and food to¹ those who hunger.

The LORD sets the¹ captive free.

⁸The LORD opens the eyes of the blind;

the LORD lifts up those who¹ are bowed down;

the LORD¹ loves the righteous. **R**

⁹The LORD cares¹ for the stranger;

the LORD sustains the orphan and widow,

but frustrates the way¹ of the wicked.

¹⁰The LORD shall¹ reign forever,

your God, O Zion, throughout all generations.¹ Hallelujah! **R**

The letter to the Hebrews describes Christ as a high priest who offers himself as a sacrifice for our sin. Christ does not die again and again each year. He died once, is alive with God, and will reveal himself on the last day.

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.²⁵ 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; ²⁶for then he would have had to suffer again and again since the foundation of

the world. But as it is, he has appeared once for all at the end of the age to remove sin by the sacrifice of himself. ²⁷And just as it is appointed for mortals to die once, and after that the judgment, ²⁸so 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.

Gospel

Mark 12:38-44

After engaging in a series of public arguments with religious leaders in the temple, Jesus contrasts the proud and oppressive ways of those leaders with the sacrificial humility and poverty of the widow.

As [Jesus] taught, he said, “Beware of the scribes, who like to walk around in long robes, and to be greeted with respect in the marketplaces,³⁹ and to have the best seats in the synagogues and places of honor at banquets!⁴⁰ They devour widows’ houses and for the sake of appearance say long prayers. They will receive the greater condemnation.”

⁴¹He sat down opposite the treasury, and watched the crowd putting money into the treasury. Many rich

people put in large sums. ⁴²A poor widow came and put in two small copper coins, which are worth a penny. ⁴³Then 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. ⁴⁴For 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.”

Prayers of Intercession

The prayers are prepared locally for each occasion. The following examples may be adapted or used as appropriate.

Rooted in God's abundant love for the world, let us pray for our neighbors, the church, and all of creation.

A brief silence.

Renew your church, O God. Make us servants to one another for the sake of the gospel. Instill a heart for service and a passion for justice in our bishops, deacons, pastors, and lay leaders (*local church leaders may be named*). Merciful God,
receive our prayer.

Renew your creation, O God. Sustain the earth and seas and all that is in them. Kindle in us a reverent awe for all creatures great and small, and strengthen us in our pursuit of climate justice. Merciful God,
receive our prayer.

Renew the nations, O God. Heal our nation's veterans from the unseen wounds of war. Tend to their trauma and soothe burdened consciences. Guide leaders of the world to end conflicts (*current places of war and conflict may be named*) and pursue peace. Merciful God,
receive our prayer.

Preparing for Next Week

Monday (commemoration of Martin, Bishop of Tours, 397; Søren Aabye Kirkegaard, teacher, 1855) Psalm 94. **Tuesday** 1 Timothy 5:9-16. **Wednesday** Luke 4:16-30. **Thursday** Psalm 16. **Friday** Daniel 4:19-27. **Saturday** Mark 12:1-12. **26th Sunday after Pentecost** (commemoration of Elizabeth of Hungary, renewer of society, 1231) Daniel 12:1-3; Psalm 16; Hebrews 10:11-14 [15-18] 19-25; Mark 13:1-8.

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Renew your people, O God. Protect those in our communities who are vulnerable or ill (*especially*). Accompany persons who are unemployed or underemployed, children who are in foster care, and those who live alone. Watch over and uphold them. Merciful God,
receive our prayer.

Renew this congregation, O God. Give us clarity in our mission and boldness in our witness. Bless our ministries that attend to basic needs of any who lack sufficient resources, that all may live with dignity. Merciful God,
receive our prayer.

Here other intercessions may be offered.

Happy are those whose help was in you. We give thanks for all your faithful ones who praised you as their God all their life long. As we eagerly wait for you, inspire us by their lives of service. Merciful God,
receive our prayer.

We offer our prayers to you, gracious God, trusting in your boundless love for all that you have made, through Jesus Christ our Savior.
Amen.