

REFLECTION FOR THE THIRTY-SECOND SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

This Sunday's liturgy invites us to live our lives in gratitude to God, who is the Lord of all that we have and all that we are. Nothing is ours, everything is a gift, and the best way to recognize this and multiply the gifts that the Lord gives us is by sharing with our brothers and sisters; and by cultivating solidarity among ourselves. The Lord teaches us that it is by sharing that we multiply.

In the first reading, we hear about the prophet Elijah's encounter with the widow of Zarephath. Because of the situation in his country, Israel, Elijah takes refuge in a foreign land, Phoenicia. There he meets this widow, and he asks her for some water and a piece of bread. The woman hurries to give him water, but tells him that she cannot give him bread, because she only has a little flour and a little oil with which she wanted to make one last loaf for herself and her son and wait for death. The prophet replies that she should make a loaf of bread for him with that last flour and the Lord will compensate her for her generosity. So it was that during Elijah's stay at this poor woman's house, the flour and oil never ran out and there was always bread to eat.

In the Gospel, Jesus begins by criticizing those who seek to always be first, those who want to attract attention, who despise others, and instead praises a poor widow who gave her last two small coins as alms in the Temple. Jesus says that she gave much more than all the others who gave large offerings, because she gave everything she had. She was poor, but in her poverty, she also wanted to help build the Temple of God by giving what little she had. She was aware that everything is a gift from the Lord God. Jesus praises her generosity, which is not measured by quantity, but by the ability to give without measuring what is given. That is why the poor are able to do so much. When we share, the miracle of multiplication happens.

A priest used to tell how, on a visit to a village in Mozambique, he passed by a children's center. There were more than 300 children to be looked after, fed, and sheltered there. The priest asked how they managed to keep that center going. One gentleman replied: *"You know, we're poor, but we're many, and with the little that each of us has, we manage to have enough to look after these children."*

Everything is a gift, so let us learn from these Mozambican people and the two poor women in the readings as they tell us about how to be generous, how to show solidarity with our brothers and sisters, and to have a heart full of tenderness and love for everyone, especially the poorest among us.

Let us learn from Jesus, who, as the second reading tells us, became man among us out of love and is now in God's glory as our High Priest. He, who offered his life for us on the cross, continues to offer himself for us today in the Eucharist, as a holy victim, offered to the Father. Nourished by his Body and Blood, let us live his love in ourselves, sowing his Good News of peace, mercy, justice, and truth in the world.

Amen.