

## Homily of Thirteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time Year A, 2020

2 Kings 4:4-11,14-16; Psalm 89:2-19; Romans 6:3-4, 8-11; Gospel 10:37-42

The first reading is from 2 Kings 4:8-11, 14-16. However, verses 12-13 have an important message. It reads, "He [Elisha] told his servant Gehazi to go and call the woman. When she came, he said to Gehazi, 'Ask her what I can do for her in return for all the trouble she has had in providing for our needs. Maybe she would like me to go to the king or army commander and put in a good word for her.' 'I have all I need here among my own people,' she answered." The woman and her husband provided for Elisha and his servant. They did this out of their generosity and good nature, and did not expect anything in return. We see in the passage, when she was asked what she needed, she said that she needed nothing; "I have all I need." But God knew what she needed. She was given a child, for she had none.

Jesus tells us in the Gospel, "Whoever receives you receives me, ... Whoever receives a prophet because he is a prophet will receive a prophet's reward, and whoever receives a righteous man because he is a righteous man will receive a righteous man's reward. Whoever gives only a cup of cold water to one of these little ones to drink because the little one is a disciple... will surely not lose his reward."

It is important that we express gratitude to those who pay their tithe to the Church; those who bring various kinds of donations to the Church; to Church missions and establishments for the work of evangelization; those who sponsor the training of seminarians; and those who volunteers for all kinds of mission work and services in the Church and not expecting any material reward in return. May our God who rewarded the Shunamite woman and her husband reward all generous benefactors and benefactresses. In Luke 6:38, Jesus promises, "Give and gifts will be given to you; a good measure, packed together, shaken down, and overflowing, will be poured into your lap. For the measure with which you measure will in return be measured out to you."

We also pray for governments, churches, organizations, and individuals who, generously, undertake works of mercy and charity to help and support the needy in our society and our world. It is a great thing that in this difficult Covid 19 Pandemic time, many people are risking and sacrificing their own lives in many ways to help those in dire need.

We are governed by the natural law of reward for work done. Scripture emphasizes that the laborer deserves his or her wages. The harder we work, the greater our reward. However, the message today challenges our world driven by the selfish and self-interest motivated attitudes of 'What's in it for me?' and 'string attached mentality.' Unfortunately, the age-old sins of 'What's in it for me?' and 'string attached mentality' pervade all areas of human existence and have brought so much horror and pain to humanity. Unfortunately, the sins of 'What's in it for me' and 'string attached mentality,' continually committed, are very much in all areas of human existence locally, nationally, and internationally. In many ways, our world has the same attitude as Judas who asked the chief priests, "What are you willing to give me if I hand him over to you?" (Matthew 26:15).

As individuals, we are invited to examine our relationships and undertakings, and see where we have offended God and fellow human beings by the sins of 'What's in it for me,' and 'string attached mentality,' and repent. We have a lot to learn from the Shunamite woman and her husband who provided for Elisha and his servant without expecting anything in return.

Jesus warns us, "Whoever loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me, and whoever loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me; and whoever does not take up his cross and follow after me is not worthy of me. Whoever finds his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for my sake will find it." This warning can be interpreted to mean, whoever is selfish and ruled by self-interest, self-seeking, self-serving, self-absorption, self-love, self-indulgence, and self-regard cannot be a true disciple of him. Jesus lived a life of selflessness, self-denial, and self-sacrifice. Our reflection today suggests that the crosses we carry and become true followers of Jesus are crosses of selflessness, self-denial, and self-sacrifice.

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