

HOMILY ~ 32nd Sunday In Ordinary Time NOVEMBER 6/7, 2021

How many of us have some fear of the future? Have anxiety over money, or the lack there of? Worry about life, being cared for? Or just frightened by life's unknown? Ask yourself this question: Do I truly believe that God will take care of me? Take a moment and honestly think about this question: ***Do I truly believe that God will take care of me?***

In the First Reading today, there was a widow who was about to prepare a final meal for her son and herself. After the meal, there would be no more food and death by starvation was sure to follow. Then Elijah the prophet shows up and asks this widow to bring him some water and then to prepare him some food. The widow declared her current state in life; however, Elijah responded by stating: **“Do Not Be Afraid”** and instructed her to proceed with his request and reminded her of God's promise that she would be taken care of. The widow complied with Elijah's request, and the widow and her son survived.

Let's imagine for a minute that you were the widow. You were penniless, had run out of options and had just about nothing left. How would you respond to Elijah's request? What was Elijah really asking of the widow when he asked her to give up her last bit of food? Isn't this story really about Faith? Isn't it really about Trust? Trust not in our own abilities, but Trust in the Lord.

Imagine you are the widow's child. How do you feel when Elijah tells your mother to first make bread for him? How do you feel after your mother makes bread; and you still have plenty of flour and oil, not enough for a day, or a week, but for a whole year the flour and oil jars never empty.

What about in our own lives? How do we handle “stressful” situations?” Do we truly believe that God will care for us? And when we endure, when we survive, do we attribute the success to God's promise?

In the Gospel today, the poor widow gave two small coins to the treasury, she gave her all. She gave all she had to live on. Jesus stated that this poor widow put in more than all the other contributors to the treasury, for they had given from their surplus wealth, but she gave from her poverty. She had contributed all she had, her whole livelihood.

Let's ask ourselves: ***“What kind of giver am I?”*** One summer during diaconate formation, I did ministry down at St. Aloysius on Saturday mornings, distributing coffee, cocoa, sandwiches and hygiene kits. I met a man, named Kenny who was sitting on the steps of the Church. He was wrapped in a blanket and had a garbage bag with him that contained his belongings. As the day progressed, I walked over to Kenny to chat. People said Kenny wouldn't converse or interact. However, I felt compelled to speak with him. I asked Kenny, “Would you like a sandwich or something to drink?” Kenny reached over and grabbed a paper bag. It contained several sandwiches that other people had given him. Not knowing what to say, I said, “Kenny, is there anything I can do for you?” Kenny

responded, “**I just wish someone really cared.**” He didn’t want a handout, he wanted someone to talk to, someone to care about him, to be acknowledged! I sat with Kenny and visited with him for over an hour on the steps of St. Aloysius. We talked about life, happiness, sadness, faith, hopes and dreams, family and love.

We established a relationship, a friendship. I am not sure who gained more from that encounter, Kenny or myself; but it clearly was special, holy and life giving. Probably the greatest gift that is often withheld is the gift of our time and attention.

I have met so many starving people, not starving for food or nourishment, but starving for attention, many among our own families and friends. We have to ask ourselves, what kind of a giver am I? Do I only give from my surplus, or do I give my all? Let’s think about the people in our own lives.

What do I give to them? Is it from my surplus, or do I truly give my all to them? Do I hold back, if so why? Is it out of fear, is it selfish, why? I was once told to look at my ability to give through the concept of the three T’s (**Time, Talent, and Treasure**). How much of my **time** do I give? How much of my **talent** do I share? What **treasure** do I possess that I am willing to give back to God? For each of us, the determination of how and what to give will be as unique as we are.

And thinking of a Parish, not unlike a family, it really is something that is built and sustained through our stewardship, through our giving of our three T’s, **Our Time, Our Talent, our Treasure**. Without such giving, a Parish cannot survive, nor even exist.

So what really is stewardship? Stewardship is a way of living. It is a lifestyle, a life of total accountability and responsibility. It is the acknowledging of God as the creator and the owner of all. Christian stewards see themselves as the caretaker of all of God’s gifts. Gratitude for these many gifts is expressed in our prayer, worship, offerings and action. Stewardship is a way of thanking God for all our blessings by returning to God a portion of the many gifts (our Time, Talent and Treasure) that we have been given. Stewardship is about the holistic approach and discernment of the three T’s God has blessed us with.

So how can we live out stewardship? By actively participating in one or more ministries in the Parish: Lectors, Altar Servers, Ushers, to name a few. By using our special skills and training in fixing things in the Church and Parish Hall, or our musical skills to sing or play an instrument at Mass. By inviting friends and neighbors (Evangelizing) and helping others join us at Mass each week. By spending our time and talents in the family by training children in prayer life to strengthen the Domestic Church, teaching them Christian behavior, prayers and the basics of our faith. Also, by actively participating in the liturgy by: paying attention, **loudly** reciting prayers, singing songs and behaving reverently in Church. The list can go on and on, but I think you get the point.

Stewardship contains action, love, trust and faith. It’s our Church, which of our Three T’s will we share?

In Christ, Deacon Don