

10th Sunday in Ordinary Time - Cycle C

Tenth Sunday in Ordinary Time

Lectionary: 90

READING 1 [1 KGS 17:17-24](#)

Elijah went to Zarephath of Sidon to the house of a widow.
The son of the mistress of the house fell sick,
and his sickness grew more severe until he stopped breathing.
So she said to Elijah,
“Why have you done this to me, O man of God?
Have you come to me to call attention to my guilt
and to kill my son?”
Elijah said to her, “Give me your son.”
Taking him from her lap, he carried the son to the upper room
where he was staying, and put him on his bed.
Elijah called out to the LORD:
“O LORD, my God,
will you afflict even the widow with whom I am staying
by killing her son?”
Then he stretched himself out upon the child three times
and called out to the LORD:
“O LORD, my God,
let the life breath return to the body of this child.”
The LORD heard the prayer of Elijah;
the life breath returned to the child’s body and he revived.
Taking the child, Elijah brought him down into the house
from the upper room and gave him to his mother.
Elijah said to her, “See! Your son is alive.”
The woman replied to Elijah,
“Now indeed I know that you are a man of God.
The word of the LORD comes truly from your mouth.”

RESPONSORIAL PSALM [PS 30:2, 4, 5-6, 11, 12, 13](#)

R. (2a) I will praise you, Lord, for you have rescued me.
I will extol you, O LORD, for you drew me clear
and did not let my enemies rejoice over me.
O LORD, you brought me up from the nether world;
you preserved me from among those going down into the pit.
R. I will praise you, Lord, for you have rescued me.
Sing praise to the LORD, you his faithful ones,
and give thanks to his holy name.
For his anger lasts but a moment;
a lifetime, his good will.
At nightfall, weeping enters in,
but with the dawn, rejoicing.
R. I will praise you, Lord, for you have rescued me.
Hear, O LORD, and have pity on me;
O LORD, be my helper.
You changed my mourning into dancing;
O LORD, my God, forever will I give you thanks.
R. I will praise you, Lord, for you have rescued me.

READING 2 [GAL 1:11-14A, 15AC, 16A, 17, 19](#)

I want you to know, brothers and sisters,
that the gospel preached by me is not of human origin.
For I did not receive it from a human being, nor was I taught it,
but it came through a revelation of Jesus Christ.

For you heard of my former way of life in Judaism,

10th Sunday in Ordinary Time - Cycle C

how I persecuted the Church of God beyond measure
and tried to destroy it, and progressed in Judaism
beyond many of my contemporaries among my race.
But when God, who from my mother's womb had set me apart
was pleased to reveal his Son to me,
so that I might proclaim him to the Gentiles,
I went into Arabia and then returned to Damascus.

Then after three years I went up to Jerusalem
to talk with Cephas and remained with him for fifteen days.
But I did not see any other of the Apostles,
only James the brother of the Lord.

ALLELUIA [LK 7:16](#)

R. Alleluia, alleluia.

A great prophet has risen in our midst
God has visited his people.

R. Alleluia, alleluia.

GOSPEL [LK 7:11-17](#)

Jesus journeyed to a city called Nain,
and his disciples and a large crowd accompanied him.
As he drew near to the gate of the city,
a man who had died was being carried out,
the only son of his mother, and she was a widow.
A large crowd from the city was with her.
When the Lord saw her,
he was moved with pity for her and said to her,
"Do not weep."
He stepped forward and touched the coffin;
at this the bearers halted,
and he said, "Young man, I tell you, arise!"
The dead man sat up and began to speak,
and Jesus gave him to his mother.
Fear seized them all, and they glorified God, crying out
"A great prophet has arisen in our midst, "
and "God has visited his people."
This report about him spread through the whole of Judea
and in all the surrounding region.

Lectionary for Mass for Use in the Dioceses of the United States, second typical edition, Copyright © 2001, 1998, 1997, 1986, 1970 Confraternity of Christian Doctrine; Psalm refrain © 1968, 1981, 1997, International Committee on English in the Liturgy, Inc. All rights reserved. Neither this work nor any part of it may be reproduced, distributed, performed or displayed in any medium, including electronic or digital, without permission in writing from the copyright owner.

10th Sunday in Ordinary Time - Cycle C

Welcome to the 10th Sunday in Ordinary Time and hopefully we are not tempted to just go back to old comfortable ways. No, Ordinary Time is the time we are given to take all the amazing events we celebrated over the past few months and make sense of them all in the one place that makes the most sense – in our everyday lives. Yes we heard that the gifts of life, faith, love and salvation are not earned by us, but are truly the unmerited gift of our Creator through His Son. However, unmerited grace does not mean being unresponsive. Contemplation and prayer is an essential effort we need to make sense of what is going on around us. So today all the way through to Advent we will be given the everyday examples offered by Jesus' public life. Whether life comes at us quickly or slowly, I have found all the challenges are sent our way to awaken us from the assumptions that we have formed over the years, many of which we out grow.

I was having dinner with a friend the other night and the conversation came around to grieving a loss of someone who had died. The discussion moved eventually around to miracles and why does God not just perform miracles for all good people all the time? So conveniently, today we are given the account of Luke as Jesus raised the dead son of a widow back to life, as well as the account of the great prophet Elijah doing the same. One could just go along with contemporary society and label all such occurrences as magic. Science reinforces this idea that the intellect will eventually conquer all diseases, aging, and all natural disasters. This view seems to be a narcissistic view of the world at best or an atheistic rejection of one's spiritual reality at worst. This view that the only power in our reality is human, even creeps into the cynical view that if there is a human intermediary then it is not from God and therefore not a miracle! But what about the young man who is out of money and loses his job and the truck quits? Who then gets a call from an acquaintance who says I kept hearing in my mind that I should call you and offer the spare car in my yard. Or the young woman who aged out of foster care and has no resources but is taken in by a loving family to shelter her while she completes school and then learn to make it on her own? Or maybe the person who goes to the surgeon to have some stents placed and finds out later that he had at the most a day or two before he would most probably have had a fatal heart attack? And the miracles continue on and on every day. So how should we look at miracles in general, miracles in our lives? These happenings that are outside of the average, outside of the expected?

A couple of weeks ago, I watched a documentary called *Finger of God*. Essentially the author traveled the world for a year searching out reports of miracles. At the beginning he finds seemingly random healings and just plain odd things. He sees a series of people that all had amalgam fillings in their teeth turned to gold or gold dust being sprinkled on people during an Evangelical worship services. He sees mass healings in different parts of Africa associated with a woman who chooses to live a life of poverty so she can be a missionary introducing Jesus to the indigenous people she visits. Or the group from an Oregon seminary that go out after hours roaming the city and asking random people if they could pray over them – pray for healing – and they are healed. The documentary is just over an hour but not until about 90% of the way through, does the author make sense of it all at least in his mind. Not many of the miracles he witnessed were for the specific gift the people were praying. As an example the gold teeth people tended to be old and wanted other ailments healed. Many of the people in Oregon were street people and had many other issues that needed to be taken care of. The people in African villages did not know Jesus before the evening they were introduced to him. Yet all they were asked if they would let Jesus cure them – and they were. The author is told by every single one of those who had been given a miracle, they would not want to trade the gift they got for the one they prayed for!

The conclusion the author makes eventually is that miracles are not to prove the existence of God but to encourage and prove how much God loves us on an individual level. I find this shift

10th Sunday in Ordinary Time - Cycle C

in focus to be what Luke tries to tell us in every miracle he relays. If we gloss over the raising of the widow's dead son, we will miss that the crowd gathered around misses the point. The miracle was not for them, rather it was in response to the suffering of the mother losing her only son. The miracle was not to prove the Hebrew's God was alive and well, but rather that He was so much more. He was a personal God who does not give us what we want, but what we need to understand and see Him and draw close to Him. In the first reading Elijah performs the miracle of raising the widow's son, many years before Jesus' miracle of similar kind. But even here we see the miracle was private and for the benefit of the widow. It reaffirms that Elijah is a prophet of the Father who is faithful to his commissioning, but even more so, she is given a gift of great love from the Father through Elijah.

It is interesting to view all the miracles in Scripture and see why they were given. Luke is especially of interest in his telling of the miracle stories. Luke is after all a physician. He was a learned man of his time, so one may ask why he is taken in by miracles. Surely he knows better. Luke is amazed and astonished even more so than the crowds precisely because he is learned. He knows dead people are dead for all time going forward – until... Until he sees God/Man show the compassion of the Father on a poor soon to be disenfranchised widow. God could have dropped gold dust on her to offset her poverty. But God felt compassion on the emotional loss of the widow. Jesus did not perform the miracle as entertainment or proof of who he was. No, he does as the Father asks – always. He always points to the Father – He always shows the compassion and mercy of the Father – not judgment. So in the story of Jesus raising the son of the widow, we can understand what is going on. Loss or grief knows no bounds. Rich or poor, we all are faced with loss sometimes. What we do next is the key to the story. We may all look to Jesus for a specific cure but He is looking to offer consolation, love, and even a miracle. Will it look like the miracle at Nain? Most probably not, but we can be comforted and consoled. We can trade the assumptions that breathe limits, doubt and pain into our very souls and come to understand and embrace the offer of consolation we get from our Lord Jesus. I would suggest it is our own narrow view of God's kindness and mercy that prevent us from seeing the many miracles in and around our own lives. We dismiss them out of hand and put it down to bravery of emergency workers or the skill of medical personnel or even luck. But we need to change our perceptions and see the uniqueness and personal nature of all miracles. Then we can understand our relationship with the Father and correct the assumptions that do not work any longer and keep us from Him?

Ordinary Time allows us the luxury of hearing the many Scripture stories that inform us of what being a Christian is all about in every day life, and then give us the chance to make them ours. By making them ours and allowing them to influence our lives, we then can know where we need to go and how to get there. The Scripture stories we hear during "Ordinary Time" gives us many opportunities to assess and improve ourselves every day. This then is the call to become Catholic Christians. Hopefully we will see how the miracles that happen in our lives bring comfort and joy into our hearts and salvation when we are all done here. In the end we know in our hearts when the Father smiled on us!

Amen