



WORD FOR SUNDAY

Fr. Albert Shamon

Sunday Readings: (R1) 1 Kgs. 17:10-16. (R2) Hebr. 9:24-28. (R3) Mk. 12:38-44.

Sunday's readings are about two widows who served God. The widow of Sidon shared her last crumb of bread and drop of oil with Elijah. The third reading tells of another widow who, several hundred years later, came to the Temple of Jerusalem. There, she gave to God "all she had to live on." The tendency is to be edified by these stories and walk away, feeling they have no meanings for us today. We listen politely and go away taking little fruit to help us in our struggles with life.

The problem could be, we miss the lesson intended for us. Are we watching only their performance which we would find so difficult to imitate? Or are we seeing the poor, humble people involved?

These stories tell of two individuals making a response to a particular situation. One acted for love of neighbor; the other for love of God (the command given in last Sunday's readings). One gave food; the other gave money. One was inspired by a holy man; the other by a holy place — the Temple, the Church! Both women are important because, through the years, each cultivated a spirit, a habit of generosity which climaxed in the events narrated. Their little daily sacrifices made possible the great sacrifice recorded in God's inspired word.

Someone said history doesn't make a hero, but a hero makes history. Or circumstances don't make a person great; they simply uncover one who is already great. Great deeds, like those of the two widows, are only the culmination of years of performing lesser generosity. An icicle is formed by drops of water trickling down and freezing. If the waterdrops are clean, the icicle is; but if dirty, so is the icicle. Character too is formed by the choices we make

each day. If good choices, a good character results; if bad choices, a bad character.

Sow a good thought,
reap a good act;
Sow a good act,
reap a good habit;
Sow a good habit,
reap a good character;
Sow a good character,
reap a destiny.

The question is, are my daily choices leading me toward a greater generosity with God and with my neighbor? For instance, at 4:15 p.m., what am I doing? Am I planning to cheat someone; am I busy cutting someone down to size? Am I speaking foully? Or, am I being a person of good will?

The widow of Sidon with her bit of bread. The widow of Jerusalem with her bit of money. What do they say to me in 1973? They say, "Keep living for Christ each day. Through your choices, make a real conversion in your life."

When should I start this conversion of mine? When I have more time? When I'm not so tired? But — why waste this very moment! Picture Christ right now. He was seated opposite the Temple treasury, watching the crowd put money into the collection box. Was He there as Judge or as One yearning for the love of men? He saw person after person concerned only with himself. Then one came with a heart of love. Jesus could hardly contain Himself. He called His disciples over. Gleefully, He pointed out that widow to them. He was elated!

God still has a treasury open. The poorest may make some offering. Christ still watches. He made much of a little act. So should we. The small acts of charity done daily out of love for God will ultimately lead to the great ones that will win the eternal approval of Christ.



THE OPEN WINDOW

Fr. Louis Hohman

Dear Father Hohman,

I want to respond to your "note to Fr. G.S. Hogan" in Oct. 17 Courier-Journal. I don't exactly understand what you are talking about when you say that you wish to become more fully human. The Fathers of the Church, especially the Fathers of the East, speak of becoming "like God." In the Mass, the Deacon says, as he pours the water into the wine, "May we come to share in the divinity of Christ as he humbled himself to share in our humanity." We are, therefore, praying to become more divine, not more human. To be more human could possibly be interpreted "to be more like Adam [i.e., man] and Adam fell into sin. Thank you Father, but I would rather be perfect, even as your heavenly Father is perfect." Man cannot achieve perfection by being more himself, but by sharing more in the divinity of Jesus Christ.

In answer to your saying that Christ was glorious in His human nature, after the Resurrection, that's true, but not the whole truth. Christ was raised from the dead by the power of the Godhead, not by the power merely of his human nature. If the latter were true, then I could raise myself from death by my own power, and I really don't think I can do that. Do you?

Sincerely,

Rev. Mr. Ronald Antinarelli

Dear Ron,

No, I do not think you could raise yourself from the dead by

your own power. Nor could Jesus Christ through his human nature. I never said or implied that. This whole thing could get into a highly abstract theological discussion which wouldn't help people one bit.

For example, when you quote, "Be perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect," you certainly can't equalize the perfection of man with the perfection of God. The word obviously means "complete." So man is to be complete as God is complete. For man, to be complete is to be whatever God made it possible for him to be, as totally in the image and likeness of God as he is capable of being and, in the new order, as totally sharing in the Divinity as he is capable of sharing (and that doesn't mean being equal to God or becoming God).

May I try to re-phrase my answer? I was saying that suffering can be mysteriously the means of going from a lower level of life to a higher. For man, that means that suffering can help raise him to the highest possible likeness to God and the fullest share possible in the Divinity of Christ. Such a person was the Mother of Sorrows.

And I still claim that in the case of Christ, His life, suffering and death, so perfectly in tune with the will of the Father, caused the Father to raise His human nature from death and make it glorious and immortal. This is the prototype of what we can do if we enter into his death by death to self and aliveness to the will of the Father. Now that's what I call "fully human."



Halloween Costumes

Sister Mary Dorothy, the principal at St. Thomas More School, captures the spirit of Halloween as she organizes children for a group picture.

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