

FIRST READING – ORDINARY B 32

A reading from the first book of Kings.

Pause – and look up at the assembly

Elijah, the prophet, set out and went to Zarephath.
When he came to the gate of the town,
a widow was there gathering sticks;
he called to her and said,
“Bring me a little water in a vessel, so that I may drink.”
As she was going to bring it, he called to her and said,
“Bring me a morsel of bread in your hand.”
But she said, “As the Lord your God lives,
I have nothing baked, only a handful of meal in a jar,
and a little oil in a jug;
I am now gathering a couple of sticks,
so that I may go home and prepare it for myself and my son,
that we may eat it, and die.”
Elijah said to her,
“Do not be afraid;
go and do as you have said;
but first make me a little cake of it and bring it to me,
and afterwards make something for yourself and your son.
For thus says the Lord the God of Israel:
“The jar of meal will not be emptied
and the jug of oil will not fail
until the day that the Lord sends rain on the earth.”
She went and did as Elijah said,
so that she as well as he and her household ate for many days.
The jar of meal was not emptied,
neither did the jug of oil fail,
according to the word of the Lord that he spoke by Elijah.

Zarephath = ZAR-ih-fath

A = a as in *cat*

Elijah = ih-LIGH-juh

Pause for **THREE** seconds

then look up at the people

and say SLOWLY:



The WORD of the LORD.

Thanks be to God.

SECOND READING – ORDINARY B 32

A reading from the letter to the Hebrews.

Pause – and look up at the assembly

Christ did not go into a tent that had been made by humans
which was only a copy of the true one,
but he entered into heaven itself,
now to appear in the presence of God on our behalf.
Nor was it to offer himself again and again,
as the high priest enters the Holy Place year after year
with blood that is not his own;
for then he would have had to suffer again and again
since the foundation of the world.
But as it is, he has appeared once for all at the end of the age
to remove sin by the sacrifice of himself.
And just as it is appointed for human beings to die once,
and after that comes the judgment,
so Christ, having been offered once to bear the sins of many,
will appear a second time,
not to deal with sin,
but to save those who are eagerly waiting for him.

Pause for **THREE** seconds
then look up at the people
and say SLOWLY:



The WORD of the LORD.

Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL READING – ORDINARY B 32

The Lord be with you.

And with your spirit.

A reading from the holy gospel according to Mark.

Glory to you, O Lord.

Jesus was teaching in the temple,
and a large crowd was listening to him.

He said,

“Beware of the scribes, who like to walk around in long robes,
and to be greeted with respect in the marketplaces,
and to have the best seats in the synagogues
and places of honour at banquets!

They devour widows’ houses
and for the sake of appearances say long prayers.

They will receive the greater condemnation.”

Jesus sat down opposite the treasury,
and watched the crowd putting money into the treasury.

Many rich people put in large sums.

A poor widow came and put in two small copper coins,
which are worth a penny.

Then he called his disciples and said to them,

“Truly I tell you, this poor widow has put in more
than all those who are contributing to the treasury.

For all of them have contributed out of their abundance;
but she out of her poverty has put in everything she had,
all she had to live on.”



The GOSPEL of the LORD.

Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

SCRIPTURES IN DEPTH

Reading I: 1 Kings 17:10-16

Both the Elijah and the Elisha cycles contain miracles involving the multiplication of food, and as such exhibit the literary genre to which the stories of miraculous feedings in the Gospels are conformed. This is their main importance for the New Testament.

The story of the widow's cruse, like the following story of the raising of her son, emphasizes the power of God's word in the prophet's mouth. In this story the power of that word is seen in the fulfillment in verse 16 of the promise given in verse 14.

Neither of these points, however, has determined the selection of the episode of the widow's cruse for today's reading. Rather, she is seen as a widow woman of the same character as the widow with the two coins in the Gospel story. Both widows gave away all that they possessed.

Responsorial Psalm: 146:7, 8-9, 9-10

This is the first psalm in the final group of Hallel psalms. God is praised for his loving-kindness toward the needy, including widows. Hence its selection here.

Reading II: Hebrews 9:24-28

This reading continues the exposition of the high priestly work of Christ in terms of a series of contrasts with the Levitical priesthood. Here are the points made this time, some of them repeated from last Sunday's passage, some of them new:

Levitical Priest

Christ

scene of his work:

a material sanctuary

the heavenly sanctuary,

God's real presence

repeated offering (yearly)

once for all

offered blood of other creatures

offered his own blood

The last sentence of our reading seeks to elucidate the once-for-all character of human death. The reference to the parousia comes rather surprisingly here, but it is probable that all through this passage the author has in mind the ceremony on the Day of Atonement.

After performing his priestly work in the Holy Place, the high priest came out of the temple and showed himself to the people, indicating thereby that the work of atonement had been accomplished.

The parousia likewise will mark the completion of Christ's high priestly work.

Note that the passages from Hebrews used last Sunday and today feature the two phrases that most clearly indicate the nature of Christ's high priestly work in heaven: "he always lives to make intercession for them" (7:25) and "now to appear in the presence of God on our behalf" (9:24).

Gospel: Mark 12:38-44 (long form); 12:41-44 (short form)

The longer form of this Gospel combines two quite distinct traditions: Jesus' denunciation of the scribes and the episode of the widow with two coins.

The denunciation of the scribes forms the conclusion to the series of Jerusalem conflict stories, whose function is to show the widening gulf between Jesus and the Jerusalem authorities, and so to prepare the way for the Sanhedrin's decision to get rid of Jesus.

The episode of the widow is joined to the denunciation by the Stichwort principle (the word "widow" occurs in each unit). Also, Mark has located the conflicts in the temple, and the story of the widow is located there by its content.

Whether by design or not, however, the two stories, taken together in this way, provide a foil for one another, for the behavior of the scribes is contrasted sharply with that of the widow. Perhaps the story of the widow was used in catechesis to illustrate the duty of almsgiving.

Reginald H. Fuller