

## Homily of Thirteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year A, 2026

**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 (omitted) 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 goodwill and did not expect anything in return. When she was asked what she needed (as a reward), she said that she needed nothing. She said, "I have all I need here among my own people." She did not need any favors from the army commander or the king. She did not even ask for prayer for herself to conceive and have a child. It was Elisha's servant who asked for a child on her behalf.

In 1 King 17:7-16, the widow of Zarephath fed Elijah from a handful of flour and a little jar of oil, the only food that remained for the widow and her son, which according to the widow, "when we have eaten it, we shall die" due to the famine. She got her reward. "She was able to eat for a year, and Elijah and her son as well; the jar of flour did not go empty, nor the jug of oil run dry..." God rewards generous and goodwill people!

Jesus tells us in today's gospel, "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 give 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 volunteer for all kinds of mission work and services in the Church far and near and do not expect any material reward in return.

We also pray for governments, churches, organizations, and individuals who, generously, undertake works of mercy and charity to helping and supporting the needy in our community, the society, and the world.

May God who rewarded the Shunamite woman and her husband and the widow of Zarephath reward all generous and goodwill people. Psalm 20:3 prays, "May God remember your every offering, and graciously accept your burnt offering." 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."

The message today challenges our world driven by the selfishness, self-interest, self-seeking, and self-serving attitudes of 'What's in it for me?' and 'string attached mentality,' which can be known as "Judas Mentality." Judas asked the chief priests, "What are you willing to give me if I hand him over to you?" (Matthew 26:15). Sadly, 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. Many human-made disasters, far and near, are caused by the sin of 'What's in it for me?'

In today's gospel, Jesus says, "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." Jesus is referring to selfishness, self-interest, self-seeking, and self-serving attitudes. Jesus continues, "... 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." Jesus is referring to self-love attitude.

We are invited to examine our relationships and dealings, and see where we have offended God and our fellow human beings by sins of selfishness, self-interest, self-seeking, self-serving, and self-love. St. Paul tells us in the second reading to die to these sins in order to become worthy of Christ and live "for God in Christ."

The Shunamite woman and her husband, and the widow of Zarephath who provided for the prophets without expecting anything in return are great models of generosity and goodwill we can imitate.

Human beings may not be able to reward. Human beings may even fail to remember. God remembers. God rewards. "God loves a cheerful giver" 2 Corinthians 9:7.

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