

Sunday, July 2, 2017

Meditation and Questions for Reflection or Group Discussion

Mass Readings:

1st Reading: 2 Kings 4:8-11, 14-16

2nd Reading: Romans 6:3-4, 8-11

Responsorial: Psalm 89:2-3, 16-19

Gospel: Matthew 10:37-42

Being a Generous Giver to Reflect God's Generosity to Others

Can something be done for her? (2 Kings 4:14)

In a farewell speech at the end of his September 2015 trip to the United States, Pope Francis told the people gathered at the Philadelphia International Airport, "Your care for me and your generous welcome are a sign of your love for Jesus and your faithfulness to him."

That sounds like something Elisha the prophet would have said to the woman we meet in today's first reading. She and her husband extended to Elisha an open invitation to come and stay with them whenever he was in town. They even went so far as to offer him a furnished room free of charge whenever he needed a place to stay.

Generous giving without expecting a reward seemed to be this family's motto. And yet, even if they didn't expect it, this elderly couple did receive a reward. Grateful for their hospitality, Elisha prayed, and God gave them a child.

Now, Scripture is clear that we are saved by Jesus alone, not by our actions. But it's also clear that God rejoices when we give our time, our treasure, and our talents in service to his people. Our acts of generosity move his heart, and he responds by pouring out his grace.

Does this mean that we should try to be generous so that God will reward us? Not exactly. Our generosity is a response, a reflection of the good he has done for us. We give generously so that we can show the world what God's generosity looks like. We go out of our way for people because we want to bring his love to them. This is why Pope Francis keeps urging us to give, to reach out, and to show God's love.

So sit down today, and try to come up with some ways you can give more to the poor, serve more in your parish or community, or be a more loving witness to the people around you. Know that the Lord rejoices in whatever you do for him.

"Lord, show me how to be a witness of generous love."

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Questions for Reflection/Discussion by Catholic Men:

1. In the first reading, a childless woman from Shunem performs an act of kindness toward Elisha by providing a place for him to stay. When Elisha finds out that “She has no son, and her husband is getting on in years,” he says to the woman, “This time next year you will be fondling a baby son.” Although what Elisha said may have seemed impossible to the woman, she was rewarded with a son for her kindness toward Elisha. In Luke 1:37, the angel Gabriel says to Mary, “For nothing is impossible with God” and in Luke 18:27, Jesus says, “What is impossible with men is possible with God.”
 - In what ways do the Scriptures from Luke 1:37 and 18:27 apply to the first reading?
 - What are the circumstances in your life that seem impossible to you? With the words from Luke 1:37 and 18:27 in mind, take some time now to pray in faith for these circumstances.
2. The responsorial psalm opens with these words: “The promises of the LORD I will sing forever, through all generations my mouth shall proclaim your faithfulness. For you have said, ‘My kindness is established forever, in heaven you have confirmed your faithfulness.’”
 - The psalmist goes on to say that our response to this should be one of singing, joyful shouting, and rejoicing. Why should this be our response?
 - How would you describe your response to the Lord’s goodness, faithfulness, and kindness toward you?
3. In the second reading from Romans, St. Paul tells us of the wonderful graces of the Sacrament of Baptism: “Are you unaware that we who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were indeed buried with him through baptism into death, so that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might live in newness of life. If, then, we have died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him.”
 - How would you describe the graces of Baptism to someone who asked you?
 - Paul understood that Jesus did not come just to forgive our sins. He came to die on the cross for our sins and put to death the very principle in us that keeps us sinning. How have you experienced the power of Baptism and the power of the cross to overcome the power of sin?
4. In the Gospel, reading Jesus tells his apostles that “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; 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 goes on to say that “Whoever receives you receives me, and whoever receives me receives the one who sent me. 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.”
 - What is your understanding of the opening words of Jesus to his apostles in the Gospel reading? What message was he trying to convey with these words? How do these words apply to you?
 - In what ways are the other words of Jesus in the Gospel reading related to the first and second readings?
5. The meditation is a reflection on the generosity of the woman and her husband to Elisha the prophet in the first reading. It describes their generosity with these words: “Generous giving without expecting a reward seemed to be this family’s motto. And yet, even if they didn’t expect it, this elderly couple did receive a reward. Grateful for their hospitality, Elisha prayed, and God gave them a child. Now, Scripture is clear that we are saved by Jesus alone, not by our actions. But it’s also clear that God rejoices when we give our time, our treasure, and our talents in service to his people. Our acts of generosity move his heart, and he responds by pouring out his grace.”
 - Why does Godly generosity mean “Generous giving without expecting a reward”?
 - How can you more fully respond to these ending words of the meditation? “So sit down today, and try to come up with some ways you can give more to the poor, serve more in your parish or community, or be a more loving witness to the people around you. Know that the Lord rejoices in whatever you do for him.”
6. Take some time now to pray and ask the Lord for the grace to give generously of your time, treasure, and talents “in service to his people.”

“Lord, show me how to be a witness of generous love.”

[The discussion questions were created by Maurice Blumberg, who is in partner relations for **The Word Among Us Partners**, (<http://www.waupartners.org/>); a ministry of **The Word Among Us** (www.wau.org) to the military, prisoners, women with crisis pregnancies or who have had abortions, and college students. He is also

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