

BLD WASHINGTON



BURÁS-LOÓB SA DIYÓS

COVENANT COMMUNITY

SERVING THE WASHINGTON, D.C. AREA

Counsels

Dispossession

Theme: We have the righteousness of Christ when we give unselfishly, trusting in God's provision.

Word: 1 Kings 17:10-16; Hebrews 9:24-28; Mark 12:38-44

Order: "Do not be afraid, be like the widow who gave from her poverty." (1 Kgs 17:13)

(BLD Global Community reflection for November 2009)

REFLECTION: The Gospel reading for this 32nd Sunday in Ordinary Time presents a comparison between false religiosity and genuine devotion to God. The situation of two widows in the gospel and the first reading are similar. Both are hard-working women. Both are poor. Both put their trust in God and both are rewarded for their faith.

The Gospel provides us with a picture of what true religion and devotion to God is. While observing people putting money into the Temple Treasury, Jesus takes the opportunity to warn His disciples against the wrong kind of religion, naming three wrong motivations in his denunciation of the religious experts of his time: the desire for prominence rather than selfless service; the desire for recognition and esteem, rather

than seeking to promote the good of others through humble service and love; and thirdly, the attempt to use one's position (even a religious position) for self-gain and self-advancement.

True religion, according to Jesus, is relating rightly to God and to one's neighbor with love, honor, and respect. The Lord puts His Holy Spirit within us that we may be filled with the joy of his presence, the joy of true worship, and the joy of selfless giving and love for others. True reverence for God frees the heart to give liberally, both to God and to neighbor.

Jesus taught His disciples a dramatic lesson in giving with love. Love doesn't calculate; it spends lavishly! Jesus drove this point home to His disciples while sitting at the temple, observing people offering their tithes. He praised a poor widow who gave the smallest of coins, in contrast to the rich who gave greater sums. How can someone so impoverished give more than those with ample means? Jesus' answer is very simple: love is more precious than gold! Jesus taught that real giving must come from the heart.

A gift that is given grudgingly, or for display, loses most of its value. But a gift given out of love, in a spirit of generosity and sacrifice, is invaluable. The amount or size of the gift is not as important as the cost to the giver. The poor widow could have kept one of her coins, but instead she recklessly gave away all she had! Jesus

praised someone who gave barely a penny – an insignificant sum – because it was everything she had, her whole living.

What we have to offer may seem insignificant, but if we put all we have at the Lord's disposal, no matter how little it may seem, God can make it abound for us and for His purposes. Do you know the joy and freedom of giving liberally to God and to neighbor with gratitude and love?

The same scenario is seen in the first reading in which a widow gives what literally was to have been hers and her son's last meal. This widow is from Zarephath, a coastal city on the Mediterranean, northwest of the Kingdom of Israel. Elijah traveled through this land during a famine. As usual during such times, the rich complain and the poor starve. The woman was poor. When Elijah met her, she was putting last scraps of food together before preparing to die with her son. Picture her as one of the starving women in Somalia or Rwanda, and or even among those who lost everything to Ondoy and Pepeng. Imagine what faith it would take to give this last morsel of food to a stranger who asks for it in the name of the Lord. By putting her trust in God, the widow Zarephath received enough to tide her over the length of the famine.

The second widow placed two small coins into the Temple treasury. In fact, what she put is called a *lepton*, literally meaning a thin one, or the smallest coin at the time and worth 1/40th of one pence. But seeing this, Jesus told His disciples that her donation, while seeming insignificant, is the greater one, because she gave from her need, while the others gave from their plenty. By Jesus' standard, her donation is an act of complete faith and trust in God.

What these two widows did is extremely difficult for most of us to understand,

especially for those who do not tithe. Many of our members may have far greater faith than some have, but we must also admit that no matter how great our faith is, it is profoundly difficult to put our total trust in God. Perhaps we think that we can solve our own problems, conquer all obstacles ourselves. Certainly, we are all tempted to believe that the proper amount of cash applied at the right time, in the right places can heal a multitude of ills.

Most will agree that the great fallacy of our age is that money can solve our problems, but the fact is that among those who have been blessed with material success, the happiest are those who have no qualms about sharing their wealth. The radical message of today's readings is that we must place our confidence in God rather than in our material possessions. This demands humility, a virtue known to the humble person who recognizes his/ her profound need for God and where he / she stands before Him. Only the humble person is certain that the presence of God in his/ her life is fundamental to happiness.

The two widows gave from their substance. They put their trust in God shouting with their actions that His presence in their lives is infinitely more important to them than anything and everything they owned. They give us fine examples of the ideal Christians, humbly trusting in God to care for them.

Perhaps, some day, you and I will have that same profound faith and trust in God. But, then again, is not that one of the reasons we go to Church? We worship God to pray for faith. Let us now pray this simple prayer of giving to the Lord what He has allowed us to possess: "Lord Jesus, all that I have is yours. Take my life, my possessions, my time and all that I have and use them as you desire for your glory."

Directions:

1. Be generous in giving out your time, talent and treasure.
2. Give food to the hungry; sustain the fatherless, orphans and the widows.

God's Promise for the Week

"For the Lord says, 'The jar of flour shall not go empty, nor the jug of oil run dry'..."

(1Kgs 17:13b)

Mary and the Saints
How they inspire us to help the Holy Souls in Purgatory

by Dan Valenti

Most of us know something about the teachings of our faith on the purification required of souls who die in God's grace and friendship but who are not perfect (see *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 1030). The Church calls this process of final purification "purgatory."

There is comfort in purgatory. The Holy Souls there are assured of attaining the joy of eternal life with God.

There is also pain in purgatory, "which is entirely different from the punishment of the damned" (*Catechism*, 1031). It is pain caused by the separation of the soul from the fullness of the Beatific Vision. Scripture speaks of that condition by using an analogy of a cleansing fire (see 1 Corinthians 3:15 and 1 Peter 1:7, for example).

The heartening aspect for us still here on earth is we can help the souls in purgatory. While the chance to help themselves has passed for the souls in purgatory, we can take an active role in hastening the process

by which they will be perfected in order to see God face to face.

Who can inspire us in helping these souls in need?

Father Janusz Kumala, MIC, who serves with the Marian Fathers of the Immaculate Conception in Lichen, Poland, speaks of the Blessed Mother's important role as a means of re-energizing our desire to give help to the souls in purgatory.

Mary's role as Mother

"We can understand Mary's concerns for the souls suffering in purgatory only when we acknowledge her to be the Mother of the Church," Fr. Janusz says. "Without a doubt, the community of the saved, who passed through the gate of death and are now undergoing purification, also belong to the mystery of the Church."

Father Janusz says Mary "enfolds with her motherly care" not only those on earth but also those "who are preparing for heaven in purgatory." Mary, he says, helps both to attain eternal happiness in heaven.

He cites the passage in St. Faustina's *Diary* in which Our Lady visits the souls in purgatory. Saint Faustina writes, "The souls call [Mary] 'The Star of the Sea.' She brings them refreshment".

In his teaching, Fr. Janusz stresses the significance of the Communion of Saints, which is "the communion of all the faithful of Christ, those who are pilgrims on earth, the dead who are being purified, and the blessed in heaven, all together forming one Church" (*Catechism*, 962). The Church, he says, "is not just any community of people but a community bonded by magnanimous Christian love, which mutually shares all spiritual good." In other words, the more perfectly one serves God on earth, the more

everyone in the Communion of Saints benefits.

This may seem to be a new way of assisting the Holy Souls, but in reality, the dead in Christ have always gained from the holiness of the faithful. In this process of communion, Fr. Janusz says, “Mary occupies a special place because she was most fully imbued and filled with the Divine Spirit of love.”

We can help, too

By thoroughly understanding this paradigm of goodness and holiness — how through the Communion of Saints, Catholics can transform the goodness of one into goodness for the whole — you begin to realize the significance in wanting to live a good and holy life. When you do so, you are helping your brothers and sisters in purgatory.

Father Janusz puts this well when he teaches that anyone “animated by a longing for personal salvation and the salvation of others is helping the souls in purgatory. It is quite obvious. If anyone treats lightly his or her own salvation and friendship with the Lord, that person won’t be concerned with the fate of other people on earth and even less about those in purgatory.”

To help the souls of the departed, Fr. Janusz says, one must have a “deep hunger” for God, who alone is everyone’s salvation. He says God doesn’t take away the opportunity to be saved from anyone, because He “wills everyone to be saved” (1 Tim 2:4). That is why He sent Jesus to earth (see Heb 5:9).

Father Janusz then looks to the teaching of Vatican II on Mary’s role: *In this singular way, she [Mary] cooperated by her obedience, faith, hope, and burning charity in the work of the Savior in giving back supernatural life to souls. Wherefore she is our mother in the order of grace. ... [This maternity] lasts until the eternal fulfillment*

of all the elect. Taken up to heaven, she did not lay aside this salvific duty, but by her constant intercession continues to bring us the gifts of eternal salvation (Lumen Gentium 61, 62).

Thus, Our Lady desires to help every person — every child of hers — achieve the precious gift of salvation.

The foundation for us

What, then, can you do to help everyone gain salvation, especially the Holy Souls in Purgatory, who can no longer help themselves? In union with the Church, Fr. Janusz shares the following goals for every Christian:

- Live a good life
- Desire and strive for salvation
- Live by the “consciousness of your redemption,” which brings spiritual joy
- “Live in love”
- Grow in a prayerful “union of love” with Mary and the Saints
- “Dwell with Christ”
- Grow in a spirit of “solidarity and mercy” toward others.

“Such a person,” Fr. Janusz says, “lives by the memory of baptism not as if it were only a remembrance from the past but a reality of grace that lasts and changes his or her life.” In the end, he says, receiving such “grace” means “participation in God’s life as the highest gift for humanity.” So as we draw closer to Christ, we are impelled to help all our brothers and sisters in need, especially the souls in purgatory.

We begin to take on the heart of Mary and the Saints in remembering that these souls are family.

Source:http://marianweb.net/archives/pdfs/maria_nhelper/Fall_2009.pdf



Accompanied by her guardian angel, St. Faustina “saw our Lady visiting the souls in purgatory. The souls call her ‘The Star of the Sea.’ She brings them refreshment” (Diary of St. Faustina)

Love Offering

- Oct. 09, 2009 \$ 707.00
- Oct. 16, 2009 \$ 606.00
- Oct. 23, 2009 \$ 704.00
- Oct. 30, 2009 \$1,378.00
- Nov. 06, 2009 \$ 937.00

Thank you for your generosity!

November Calendar

- Nov. 06 1st Friday Eucharistic Celebration
- 08 The Teaching of Jesus Christ Disciples’ Assembly
- 13 Praise & Worship
- 13-15 Marriage Encounter No. 10
- 14 Don Moen Benefit Concert
- 20 Praise & Worship
- 21 Flashback to the 50’ to 80’s
- 27 Thanksgiving Mass

Community Calendar

- Nov. 13-15, 2009
Marriage Encounter No. 10
Hilton Wash. Dulles Airport Hotel
13869 Park Center Road
Herndon, VA 20171
- Nov. 14, 2009
Don Moen Benefit Concert for the
Philippine Typhoon Victims
Newark Symphony Hall
1030 Broad Street
Newark, NJ at 7:00 PM
- Nov. 21, 2009
Flashback to the 50’s to 80’s
Fundraising Benefit Dance
Fort Myer Recreation Center
228 McNair Rd, Bldg 405
Fort Myer, VA 22211
5:00 - 11:00 PM

Please check our website www.bldwashington.com for 2009 Schedule of Events.

Reminder

Please sign in and wear your BLD IDs during Praise & Worship and Community Functions.