

Thirty-Second Sunday in Ordinary Time † Sunday, 7 November 2021



Remembrance Day

In England & Wales Cycle of Prayer: Prisoners and their families

Keynote: The poor it is who inherit the kingdom of God

First Book of Kings 17: 10-16

In time of drought and famine throughout the land the Prophet Elijah goes to a town known to be the hotbed of the followers of the pagan God Baal. Even in such a place, the true Lord God will reach out to show his power. Reaching the city gate *'there was a widow gathering sticks'* and Elijah asks *'please bring me a little water in a vessel for me to drink... (and) a scrap of bread in your hand.'* The poor widow, about to make her last meal responds *'I have no baked bread... only a handful of meal in a jar and a little oil in a jug... and (go to) prepare this for my son to eat, and then we shall die.'*

The prophet assures her of God's promise, *'Jar of meal shall not be spent, and jug of oil shall not be emptied before the day when the Lord sends rain on the face of the earth.'* The woman went and did as Elijah told her *'they ate the food, she, himself and her son. The jar of meal was not spent nor the jug of oil emptied, just as the Lord had foretold through Elijah.'*

Responsorial Psalm 145 (146): 7-10 – A song in praise of God's enduring fidelity

Letter to the Hebrews 9: 24-28

The letter's author continues to contrast the imperfect human priesthood of the Old Testament with the perfect Priesthood of Christ. Where the former priests had, time and again, year after year, to repeat their sacrifices and prayers for atonement. But for us, with Christ as High Priest, it is different. *'(Christ) has made his appearance once and for all, now at the end of the last age, to do away with sin by sacrificing himself... so, Christ, offers himself only once to take the faults of many on himself, and when he comes a second time... it will be to reward with salvation those who are waiting for him.'*

Gospel according to Mark 12: 38-44

A different poor widow features in the gospel narrative today. After warning his disciples not to copy *'the scribes who like to walk about in long robes, to be greeted obsequiously in the market squares, to take the front seats in the synagogues and places of honour at banquets'* Jesus sat down opposite the treasury and *'watched the people putting money into the treasury... a poor widow came and put in two small coins.'*

Jesus calls his disciples: *'I tell you solemnly, this poor widow has put more in than all who have contributed to the treasury; for they have put in money they had over, but she from the little she has put in everything she possessed, all she had to live on.'*

In both readings today, the widow has something to teach us about life and our relationship with God and with others. On another occasion Jesus taught his disciples: *'Happy are the poor for they shall inherit the Kingdom of God.'*