



### **SUNDAY REFLECTION**

Elisha's identity is to be the prophet of God. He does not work alone but with the help of God who is ever-present. The work of the prophet is to be attentive to the will of God and to carry it out in life.

The reading from Ephesians ties in with the story of Elisha because it speaks of the importance of recognizing our vocational call. Why are we here? What is our purpose as Christians? By reflecting on these questions we are better able to discern the will of God in our lives and to carry it out in what we say and do, adopting a disposition of humility, gentleness and patience so that we can bring about peace and unity in our daily affairs. We do not accomplish this alone because the Spirit of God is with us since the one God who is Father of us all, works through us and in us (Eph. 4:5).

A good example of this is in the Gospel account today. The disciples managed to feed the five thousand people precisely because Jesus was with them. While it was Jesus who multiplied the loaves and fish, it was the disciples who had got the people to sit down so that Jesus could do what He wanted to do.

The servant of Elisha and the disciples of Jesus did the same thing when faced with a difficult situation: they listened to Elisha and to Jesus, and carried out their instructions without further objections. They listened to their masters who were wiser than them and by doing so they grew in wisdom.

The Hebrew notion of wisdom (*hokmah*) comes from reflecting on a life lived. The wisdom that emerges from today's readings points four things. The first is the importance of reflecting on all the signs and wonders that the Lord has done in our lives to help us to belief in Him and to know that we are not alone. The second is the necessity of faith even when it seems at all odds to the reality of a situation. The third is that we are called to celebrate and re-confirm our faith together in the Eucharist because we know that we, like the people in the stories, need bread, the bread that brings life, Jesus Christ, and fourthly, in the true spirit of discipleship we are called to call others to faith so they, like the psalmist, may pray: "The eyes of all look to you, and you give them their food in due season. You open your hand, satisfying the desire of every living thing. The Lord is just in all His ways, and kind in all His doings. The Lord is near to all who call on Him, to all who call on Him in truth." (Ps. 145:15-18)

**STEWARDSHIP:** "The hand of the Lord feeds us," says the psalmist, "he answers all our needs." Both Elisha's servant in the first reading and the disciples in the Gospel story who witnessed the feeding of the five thousand saw this happen and knew it to be true.

## READINGS EIGHTEENTH SUNDAY

1 AUG '21

**Ex. 16:2-4, 12-15:** The starving Israelites beg Moses to feed them. The Lord rains down food from heaven.

**Eph. 4:17, 20-24:** Many pleasures are illusory. St. Paul prescribes a total renewal in the way we think a return, in other words, to the way God created us to be.

**Jn. 6:24-35:** People were expecting Jesus to be like Moses, providing them with daily bread. Instead, Jesus offers them fresh, rejuvenating food, unlike any other.

## PROPHET ELISHA

Elisha, whose name in Hebrew means God is Salvation, was an Israelite prophet and disciple of Elijah. Accounts of Elisha's life and activities are found in 1 and 2 Kings, but these biblical texts are the only records we have of such a person.

### When did Elisha live?:

According to the Bible, Elisha was active during the reigns of Israelite kings Joram, Jehu, Jehoahaz, and Joash, which would place him during the last half of the 9th century BCE.

### Where did Elisha live?:

Elisha is described as the son of a (possibly rich) farmer in Galilee who was called by Elijah while tilling one of his family's fields. This story has strong parallels with the accounts of Jesus calling his own disciples in Galilee, some of whom were in the act of fishing when Jesus encountered them. Elisha preached and worked in the northern kingdom of Israel and eventually came to live on Mt. Caramel with a servant.

### What did Elisha do?:

Elisha is depicted as a miracle worker, for example healing the sick and reviving the dead. One curious story has him calling out two bears to maul and kill a group of children who mocked his bald head. Elisha was also heavily involved in politics, for example helping the kings forces attack Moab and defend Israel against Syrian attacks.

### Why was Elisha important?:

Elisha's message to those in charge was that they should turn back to traditional religious practices and acknowledge Gods absolute sovereignty over every aspect of life, personal as well as political. When he healed the sick, it was to demonstrate Gods power over life and death. When he helped in battle, it was to demonstrate Gods power over nations and kingdoms. Whereas his mentor Elijah was constantly in conflict with political authorities, Elisha had a much friendlier relationship with them. King Joram was, however, the son of Ahab and therefore doomed by Elijah. With Elisha's encouragement, general Jehu killed Joram and assumed the throne. The religious purge that followed may have reinforced traditional beliefs, but at the cost of weakening the kingdom militarily and politically.

## Bread & Wine Became Body & Blood Of Jesus

- **There is another reason why God will always accept our gift in the Eucharistic Liturgy:**
- **because during Mass, the bread and wine, work of our hands, become the Body and Blood of his Son, Jesus.**
- **The Priest takes the chalice and the bread:**
  - He asks God to send His Spirit upon the gifts to make them holy,
  - so that they may become the Body and Blood of Jesus.
- **Then he say the words of consecration, *doing exactly what Jesus commanded his apostles to do,* the night before he died:**
- **The Priest takes the bread and the wine, and he says, "This is my Body... This is my Blood... Do this in memory of me."**



## EUCCHARIST

In Year B, the reading cycle for Sunday Masses that we are currently in, the lectionary supplements our reading of the Gospel of Mark with readings from the Gospel of John. This is, partly, because Mark's Gospel, being shorter than the other Gospels, does not have enough text for all the ordinary Sunday's and partly, to privilege particular strands that are taken from the Gospel of John. For the next several Sunday we are invited to contemplate sections of chapter 6 of John's Gospel with its famous discourse on Jesus as the Bread of Life.

Also in the weeks ahead, really the months ahead we will be looking at the Eucharist and the development of our understanding of it.

## **SAINT OF THE WEEK ST. MARTHA 29 JULY**

Saint Martha is commemorated each year on 29 July. From her diligence, we learn not to allow ourselves to be so overcome by daily duties that we neglect love; from her profession of faith we learn that life in God makes us experience wonders that we could not believe possible.

We learn about Saint Martha from the Gospels. She was from Bethany, a village a few kilometers from Jerusalem. The sister of Lazarus and Mary, she was considered diligent and meticulous; she was certainly one of the first to believe in Jesus. The Lord was often a guest in her home, especially during the time of His preaching in Jerusalem.

Saint Luke especially is able to “draw us a picture” of St Martha, describing her daily life. In his Gospel, relating one time when Jesus was visiting His friends in Bethany, the Evangelist writes: “As they continued their journey He entered a village where a woman whose name was Martha welcomed Him. She had a sister named Mary [who] sat beside the Lord at his feet listening to Him speak. Martha, burdened with much serving, came to Him and said, ‘Lord, do you not care that my sister has left me by myself to do the serving? Tell her to help me.’ The Lord said to her in reply, ‘Martha, Martha, you are anxious and worried about many things. There is need of only one thing. Mary has chosen the better part and it will not be taken from her.’”

The Master helps her to understand that even praiseworthy labor can risk obscuring the interior life. It is a warning that causes one to reflect on how important it is to nourish the spirit, to listen to the Word of God, because it is the Word of God that gives meaning to our daily activities. Nonetheless, on account of her admirable dedication to doing the work necessary to offer a guest a comfortable respite, the Church recognizes Martha as a model of industriousness.

And so Martha and Mary are serve respectively as examples of the active and the contemplative life; the life of external activity and the life of prayer. In the life of a Christian, neither should be lacking; activity and contemplation should be seen as complementary, and not opposed to one another.

### **Martha’s Profession of Faith**

Saint Martha has also left us a strong witness of faith. We see, in her response to Jesus’ questions after the death of her brother Lazarus, a total belief, a faith that does not hesitate, does not doubt. Martha has complete confidence in God, even in the face of what seems impossible on a human level: “When Martha heard that Jesus was coming, she went to meet Him; but Mary sat at home. Martha said to Jesus, ‘Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died. [But] even now I know that whatever you ask of God, God will give you.’” It is already an extraordinary profession of faith; but the colloquy between Martha and Jesus continues. And from this simple woman of Bethany, we come to understand what it means to believe in Jesus Christ: “Jesus said to her, ‘Your brother will rise.’ Martha said to Him, ‘I know he will rise, in the resurrection on the last day.’ Jesus told her, ‘I am the resurrection and the life; whoever believes in me, even if he dies, will live, and everyone who lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?’ She said to him, ‘Yes, Lord. I have come to believe that you are the Messiah, the Son of God, the one who is coming into the world.’” It is the essence of Christianity; Martha, in her answer, condenses the whole of the faith into a simple confession



of belief, which in turn is the faith of every believer; a simple answer in which every Christian can recognize the meaning of life.

### **The Origins of Her Liturgical Memorial**

Tradition tells us that, after the first persecutions of Christians, Saint Martha, with Mary, and Lazarus, and other disciples, left their own land and went to France, arriving in Saintes-Maries-de-la-Mer, in Provence, where they brought the Christian faith. The liturgical memorial of Saint Martha was begun by Franciscans, in 1262, who celebrated her feast on 29 July, eight days after the feast of her sister, St Mary Magdalene. In Bethany (now known as El-Azariyeh, "the place of Lazarus"), one can find the tomb of Lazarus, as well as a sanctuary built upon the remains of Byzantine and Crusader structures -- themselves constructed on top of a pre-existing structure. This is believed to be the house of Martha. The church, with its sanctuary in the form of a Greek-cross, is embellished with beautiful mosaics, that portray the episodes related in the Gospel that refer to Martha, Mary, and Lazarus.

## **PRAYERS**

### **Prayer to St. Martha**

O blessed St. Martha, your faith led Jesus to proclaim, "I am the resurrection and the life"; and faith let you see beyond his humanity when you cried out, "Lord I believe that you are the Messiah, the Son of God." With firm hope you said, I know that God will give you whatever you ask of him, and Jesus called your brother Lazarus back from the dead. With pure love for Jesus you welcomed him into your home. Friend and servant of our Savior, I too am "troubled about many things." (*Pause for silent prayer.*) Pray for me that I may grow in faith, hope and love, and that Jesus, who sat at your table, will hear me and grant me a place at the banquet of eternal life. Amen.

### **Parent's Prayer to St. Joseph**

O Glorious St Joseph, to you, God committed the care of His only begotten Son amid the many dangers of this world.

We come to you and ask you to take under your special protection the children God has given us.

Through holy baptism, they became children of God and members of His holy Church.

We consecrate them to you today, that through this consecration they may become your foster children.

Guard them, guide their steps in life, form their hearts after the hearts of Jesus and Mary.

St Joseph, who felt the tribulation and worry of a parent when the child Jesus was lost, protect our dear children for time and eternity.

May you be their father and counsellor.

Let them, like Jesus, grow in age as well as in wisdom and grace before God and men.

Preserve them from the corruption of his world, and give us the grace one day to be united with them in Heaven forever. Amen.

### **Prayer before the Eucharist**

Eternal Savior, Your Son came on this earth so that He could be the bread of life! Thank You,

Lord, because those who come to You shall not hunger, and those who believe in You will never thirst. Thank You for satisfying our hunger and quenching our thirst! Because of You, we are made whole, because of Your sacrifice we are free! Precious Lamb, we do not take what You did for us for granted, Amen.

**John 6:35**

**SCHEDULE SIXTEENTH WEEK ORDINARY TIME  
SATURDAY 17 JULY - SUNDAY 25 JULY**

**Saturday 24 Jul 16<sup>th</sup> Week Ordinary Time St. Sharbel Makhluaf Priest**

**8:30 a.m. Mass Proper Holy Mary, Queen & Mother of Mercy #39, Preface  
BVM, Eucharistic Prayer II  
(Intention: Myra Lee Seimetz)**

**11:00 a.m. KoC Installation**

**1:30 – 4:30 p.m. Confessions**

**5:00 p.m. Mass Vigil of the Seventeenth Sunday  
Proper, Gloria, Preface & Eucharistic Prayer III  
(Intention: Lucy Tabit)**

**Sunday 25 Jul Seventeenth Sunday Ordinary Time**

**7:00 a.m. Mass Proper, Gloria, Preface for Sunday & Eucharistic Prayer II  
(Intention: Parish of St. Stephen Martyr)**

**8:30 a.m. Mass Proper, Gloria, Preface for Sunday & Eucharistic Prayer III  
(Intention: Remigio Ramos)**

**11:30 a.m. Mass Proper, Gloria, Preface for Sunday & Eucharistic Prayer III  
(Intention: Charlotte McCarthy)**

**2:00 p.m. Mass Brig**

**Monday 26 Jul Day Off**

**Tuesday 27 Jul 17<sup>th</sup> Week Ordinary Time**

**8:30 a.m. Mass For the Church #1B Preface, Eucharistic Prayer II**

**6:30 p.m. Meeting**

**Wednesday 28 Jul 17<sup>th</sup> Week Ordinary Time**

**6:30 a.m. Mass 26<sup>th</sup> Sunday Preface & Eucharistic Prayer III**

**7:00 a.m. - 8:30 a.m. Confessions**

**8:30 a.m. Mass 26<sup>th</sup> Sunday Preface & Eucharistic Prayer III**

**Thursday 29 Jul 17<sup>th</sup> Week Ordinary Time St. Martha**

**8:30 a.m. Mass Proper, Preface of Saints II, Eucharistic Prayer III**

**5:00 – 6:30 p.m. Confessions**

**6:30 p.m. Mass Proper, Preface of Saints II, Eucharistic Prayer III**

**Friday 30 Jul 17<sup>th</sup> Week Ordinary Time St. Peter Chrysologus Bishop, Doctor of Church**

**8:30 a.m. Mass Proper, Preface of Saints, & Eucharistic Prayer III  
(Intention: Kenny Morris)**

**1:00 p.m. Grave Side Horton**

**5:00 – 7:00 p.m. Adoration & Confessions**

**Saturday 31 Jul 17<sup>th</sup> Week Ordinary Time St. Ignatius of Loyola**

**8:30 a.m. Mass Proper, Preface of Saints, & Eucharistic Prayer III**

**1:30 p.m.– 4:30 p.m. Confessions**

**5:00 p.m. Vigil Mass 18<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Ordinary Time**

**Proper, Gloria, Preface for Sunday I, Eucharistic Prayer III**

**(Intention: Parish of St. Stephen Martyr)**

**Sunday 1 Aug 18<sup>th</sup> Sunday Ordinary Time**

**7:00 a.m. Mass Proper, Gloria, Preface for Sunday I, Eucharistic Prayer II**

**(Intention: Edward Boone)**

**8:30 a.m. Mass Proper, Gloria, Preface for Sunday I, Eucharistic Prayer III**

**(Intention: John Cole)**

**11:30 a.m. Mass Proper, Gloria, Preface for Sunday I, Eucharistic Prayer III**

**(Intention: Ramor & Mercedes Cruz)**

**2:00 p.m. Mass Brig**



