



She was able to eat for a year, and he and her son as well,  
 the jar of flour did not go empty,  
 nor the jug of oil run dry,  
 as the LORD had foretold through Elijah.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM Psalm 146:7, 8-9, 9-10 (1b)

R. Praise the Lord, my soul!  
 or R. Alleluia.

The LORD keeps faith forever, secures justice for the oppressed, gives food to the hungry, The LORD sets captives free.	The LORD loves the just; the LORD protects strangers.
The LORD gives sight to the blind; the LORD raises up those who were bowed down.	The fatherless and the widow he sustains, but the way of the wicked he thwarts. The LORD shall reign forever; your God, O Zion, through all generations. Alleluia.

READING II Hebrews 9:24-28

A reading from the Letter to the Hebrews

**Christ did not enter into a sanctuary made by hands,**  
 a copy of the true one, but heaven itself,  
 that he might now appear before God on our behalf.  
**Not that he might offer himself repeatedly,**  
 as the high priest enters each year into the sanctuary  
 with blood that is not his own;  
 if that were so, he would have had to suffer repeatedly  
 from the foundation of the world.  
 But now **once** for all he has appeared at the end of the ages  
 to take away sin by his sacrifice.  
 Just as it is appointed that **human beings die once,**  
 and after this the **judgment,** so also Christ,  
 offered once to take away the sins of many,  
 will appear a **second time,** not to take away sin  
 but to bring salvation to those who **eagerly** await him.

For meditation and context:

This passage needs to be taken slowly.  
 The author is contrasting repeatable cultic  
 practices with Jesus' once and for all salvific  
 sacrifice.  
 Emphasize "not" so that the claim of  
 what Jesus didn't do is made clear.

The passage ends with good news; use an  
 uplifting tone. Those who have accepted  
 the offer of salvation will be rewarded when  
 Jesus comes again.

entered the sanctuary of the temple each  
 year to offer sacrifice on behalf of the  
 people, so Jesus entered the heavenly  
 sanctuary, offering his very blood for the  
 redemption of humanity.  
 There is a significant difference  
 between Jesus' sacrifice and that of past  
 high priests. Since Jesus is the perfect sac-  
 rifice, there is no need for any other sacri-  
 fices. Jesus' priesthood transcends the  
 Levitical priesthood, offering more in a  
 more permanent fashion. Likewise, Jesus'  
 sacrifice is not limited to the people of  
 Israel but extends to all of humanity.

Drawing parallels between the first  
 and second readings, we see how God's  
 actions through Jesus are in keeping with  
 his saving character yet also extend far  
 beyond the small glimpse of it we see in  
 the first reading. In the same way that God  
 provided for the widow of Zarephath in the  
 first reading, he provides for all of humanity  
 through Jesus' sacrificial offering. In this  
 case, instead of a drought on the earth, the  
 drought is a spiritual deficit brought about  
 through sin. Jesus' death and resurrection  
 overcome death, bringing life to God's peo-  
 ple, who are made new. Just as the widow  
 of Zarephath experienced salvation, so  
 does all humanity receive salvation. Yet  
 this salvation Jesus offers is everlasting,  
 for Jesus offered the perfect sacrifice "once  
 for all" for the forgiveness of sins. As the  
 widow of Zarephath gave away that which  
 would sustain her and her son, Jesus also  
 held nothing back. He gave everything,  
 including his body and blood, for the salva-  
 tion of the world.

GOSPEL

Today's Gospel continues  
 the themes of God's provi-

GOSPEL Mark 12:38-44

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Mark

In the course of his teaching Jesus said to the crowds, "Beware of the scribes, who like to go around in long robes and accept greetings in the marketplaces, seats of honor in synagogues, and places of honor at banquets. They devour the houses of widows and, as a pretext recite lengthy prayers. They will receive a very severe condemnation."

[He sat down opposite the treasury

and observed how the crowd put money into the treasury. Many rich people put in large sums.

A poor widow also came and put in two small coins worth a few cents.

Calling his disciples to himself, he said to them,

"Amen, I say to you, this poor widow put in more than all the other contributors to the treasury.

For they have all contributed from their surplus wealth, but she, from her poverty, has contributed all she had, her whole livelihood."]

[Shorter: Mark 12:41-44 (see brackets)]

always have someone to advocate for them she had," withholding nothing from God. if they were being taken advantage of. There are many injunctions in the Old Testament against exploiting widows (for example, Isaiah 10:1-2; Jeremiah 7:6; Ezekiel 22:7), yet this is what the scribes are doing. Jesus assures the crowds that such people will eventually receive divine justice for their actions. The second half of today's Gospel presents an example of true piety. Jesus reveals his supernatural knowledge of what lies in the hearts of people when he tells his disciples that the poor widow gave "all

our lives. Do we give everything over to God, not just financially, but also our time, our worries, our joys, our prayer life? Do we accept Jesus' all-giving sacrifice in our daily lives, sharing his love with others? M.B.

Place a comma after "teaching."

The long robes call attention to the scribes but for the wrong reason. Slightly elongate "long" so that it sounds like what it represents.

Clearly proclaim Jesus' mention of the widows so that the assembly can make a connection with the widow in the first reading. Do likewise later in the reading. Imagine Jesus observing the scene at the temple.

Instead of teaching a larger crowd here (as in the first half of the reading), Jesus now teaches his disciples.

Read with a tone of approval for the actions of the widow.

reading presents an example of false piety. The scribes go about seeking earthly recognition and respect while neglecting their spiritual lives. They recite lengthy prayers to attract the attention of those around them, seeking to appear pious and earn the respect of humans. They do not pray in order to glorify God or as a means of working on and improving upon their relationship with God. Jesus accuses the scribes of devouring widows' houses. Widows were among the most vulnerable of society because they had limited means of income and did not