

Cycle B 32nd Sunday in Ordinary Time
Sunday November 11th, 2018

This past week we our nation experienced another mass shooting in California. 12 innocent souls were lost. One of those souls that were lost was Sergeant Ron Helus of the Ventura County Sheriff's Office. Sergeant Helus was set to retire next year. On Wednesday evening he received the report of an active shooter. When he received the call he did not hesitate and think about retirement. Sergeant Helus immediately thought of others. He responded to the scene and was among the first police officers to confront the shooter. The selfless actions of Sergeant Ron Helus saved lives according to the Sheriff Geoff Dean. Sergeant Ron Helus willing gave everything, all he had for the good of another person. How willing are we to give all that we have for another person? How willing are we to give all that we have for God? Often times the gift of self comes with great sacrifice!

The passage that we hear today from the First Book of Kings reveals the giving of one's self and all that one has. In order to understand fully the situation Elijah finds himself in; we can go back and read previous chapters of the First Book of Kings, and find that Elijah is prophesying for God against the kings of Israel who were worshiping false gods and not serving God or the people of Israel.

King Ahab and his wife Jezebel wanted all of God's prophets: including Elijah eliminated; since they did not like truth, and the first reaction to truth is anger.

Elijah was instructed by the Lord to seek refuge in Zarepath in Sidon. This was not a community of Israel; rather it was a pagan town. The widow and her son had just enough flour and oil for just a little bread and then they would starve because of the drought. Nevertheless, Elijah asked for a cup of water and a bit of bread. With his request and the power of God he assured the widow that the jar of flour and the jug of oil would not go empty. The widow who was not a follower of the Lord gave what she had and as a result the jar and jug did not go empty.

In today's Gospel Jesus was observing how the crowd put money into the treasury of the temple. He pointed out that many people were putting into the temple treasury from their surplus wealth, while the widow put in two small coins. Jesus teaching with divine authority said that the wealthy put in from their surplus of wealth, while the poor widow put in more than all the others since she gave from her poverty. This woman gave all she had her whole livelihood.

The writer from the Letter to the Hebrews teaches us that Christ preeminently gave all for our salvation. The sacred writer says, “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 judgement, so also Christ offered once to take away the sins of many.” Jesus gave all He had for the will of the Father and our salvation.

So, just as Sergeant Ron Helus, the widow of Zarepath, Elijah the prophet, the widow with the two small coins; all willingly gave all they had for God and others, with Jesus preeminently giving all He had to follow the will of the Father and give us salvation on the cross; we too are being presented with the same challenge as followers of Jesus Christ. Are we willing to give all we have for God and for others?