

***ctkAlive! Scripture Study***  
**32<sup>nd</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time**  
**2021—B Cycle**



Source: [Salvation Army](#)

**Opening Prayer**

**Prayer for the Virtue of Generosity**

Lord Jesus, teach me to be generous;  
teach me to serve you as you deserve,  
to give and not to count the cost,  
to fight and not to heed the wounds,  
to toil and not to seek for rest,  
to labor and not to seek reward,  
except that of knowing I do your will.  
Amen.

[St. Ignatius of Loyola](#)

Source: [Online Ministries](#) (Creighton University, Omaha, NE)

**Scripture Readings**

I Kings 17: 10-16 “The jar of flour shall not go empty, nor the jug of oil run dry.”

Psalms 146: 7-10 “The Lord keeps faith forever.”

Hebrews 9: 24-28 “Christ did not enter a sanctuary made by human hands.”

Mark 12: 38-44 “A poor widow came and put two coins worth a few cents (into the temple treasury).”

**A Reading from the First Book of Kings (17: 10-16)**

It would help to start with a graphic [overview of the Books of Kings](#), provided in visual form by the [Bible Project](#) (8 min).

“Elijah went to Zarephath. On reaching the gate of the town, he saw a widow gathering sticks. He called to her and said, ‘Bring me a little water in a vessel that I may drink.’”

“As she was going to bring it, he called after her and said, ‘Bring me also a piece of bread.’

“But she answered, ‘As Yahweh your God lives, I have no bread left, but only a handful of flour in a jar and a little oil in a jug. I am just now gathering some sticks so that I may go in and prepare something for myself and my son to eat—and die.’

“Elijah then said to her, ‘Do not be afraid. Go, and do as you have said. But first make me a little cake of it and bring it to me. Then make some for yourself and your son. For this is the word of Yahweh, the God of Israel, ‘The jar of meal shall not be emptied nor shall the jug of oil fail, until the day when Yahweh sends rain to the earth.’

“So she went and did as Elijah told her, and she had food for herself, Elijah, and her son from that day on. The jar of flour was not emptied nor did the jug of oil fail, in accordance with what Yahweh had said through Elijah.”

### Personal Reflection

The prophet Elijah’s reflections were edited during the Babylon exile, beginning in 587 BC/BCE. This is “religious” history and is not intended as a fact-heavy account of Elijah’s life and actions. For instance, Kings hardly discuss the important reigns of Omri and of Jeroboam II in the northern kingdom of Samaria. Its judgment on the kings is always negative, blaming them for the division of the ancient kingdom of David. Only a few kings of Judah are praised for their loyalty to Yahweh. We can delineate the three parts of the Book of Kings:

- the grandeur of Solomon’s reign and the new Jerusalem temple;
- a history of the two kingdoms of Israel and Judah after their division;
- the era following the destruction of the southern Kingdom of Israel its history until Jerusalem’s destruction.

The drought mentioned in our current passage harmed everybody, including Elijah. For believers, the plague offered an opportunity to experience the truth that Yahweh does not abandon true believers in times of trouble.

— *When was the last time I helped a stranger who needed my care?*

— *When did someone, perhaps a stranger, come to my aid in a time of need? What was my problem? The outcome?*

### **Responsorial Psalm 146 (7-10)**

Praise to God who maintains the world.

*Praise the Lord, my soul!*

Yahweh is forever faithful;  
he gives justice to the oppressed  
and gives food to the hungry.

*Praise the Lord, my soul!*

Yahweh sets the prisoners free.  
Yahweh gives sight to the blind;  
Yahweh straightens the bent.  
Yahweh protects the stranger;  
sustains the widow and the orphan.  
*Praise the Lord, my soul!*

Yahweh loves the virtuous;  
but he brings to ruin the way of the wicked.  
Yahweh will reign forever, your God, O Zion,  
from generation to generation. Alleluia!  
*Praise the Lord, my soul!*

Or perhaps you'd like to pray this psalm in song with "[Praise the Lord, My Soul](#)" presented by [Bob Hurd](#).

### Personal Reflection

In this psalm, God demonstrates a faithful love for those who are disadvantaged (oppressed, hungry, captive), because of others, or because of illness (blind or fainting), or other difficult circumstances of life (migrants, orphans, and widows). David praises Yahweh who comes to our aid. We must rely on God alone, casting our cares on the Lord who cares for us. If we believe totally in God's loving care, we can truly pray this psalm.

"Yahweh is *forever* faithful."

— *How have I personally experienced the faithfulness of God in my life?*

"Yahweh loves the virtuous but brings to ruin the way of the wicked."

— *How have I experienced this in my own lifetime, when so much evil seems to go unpunished and so many people suffer as a result?*

### A Reading from the Letter to the Hebrews (9: 24-28)

"Christ did not enter some sanctuary made by human hands, a copy of the true one, but heaven itself. He is now in the presence of God, on our behalf. He had not to offer himself many times, as the (Jewish) high priest does—he, who, may return every year, because the blood is not his own.

"Otherwise, (Christ) would have suffered many times, from the creation of the world. But no; he manifested himself only now, at the end of the ages,\* to take away sin by sacrifice, and, as humans die only once, and afterward are judged, in the same way, Christ sacrificed himself, once to take away the sins of the multitude. There will be no further question of sin, when he comes again to save those waiting for him."

*\* Many first century Christians thought their generation would be the last before the end of the world.*

### Personal Reflection

Keep in mind that this letter targeted Jewish converts to the Christian faith. And this at a time of great peril to all Jews, as the Roman army descended upon Jerusalem and temple (March of 70 AD/CE).

These chapters allow us to see Jesus at close range, the unique priest. He shares his priesthood with all the baptized in the measure of their involvement in the life of the Church, whether in preaching, helping neighbors, or quite simply in the silence of prayer and/or a life of suffering.

— *How grateful am I that Jesus died for me, wiping away my daily moral and spiritual weaknesses? How do I express that gratitude in prayer and action for the good of others? What might I do more, in gratitude for the gifts of grace and salvation?*

### Proclamation from the Gospel according to Mark (12: 38-44)



*"The Widow's Mite"*  
by Paolo João Zeferino da Costa  
1876.

"As he was teaching, he also said to them, 'Beware of those teachers of the law, who enjoy walking around in long robes and being greeted in the marketplace; and who like to occupy reserved seats in the synagogues; and the first places at feasts. They even devour the widow's and the orphan's goods, while making a show of long prayers. How severe a sentence they will receive!'

"Jesus sat down opposite the temple treasury and watched the people dropping money into the treasury box; and many rich people put in large offerings. But a poor widow also came and dropped in two small coins. Then, Jesus called his disciples and said to them, 'Truly I

say to you, this poor widow put in more than all those who gave offerings. For all of them gave from their plenty, but she gave from her poverty, and put in everything she had, her very living.'"

### Personal Reflection

The teachers of the law weren't terrible human beings. They followed their vocation because they believed they answered a call from God. But as soon as religious leaders and teachers stop striving for holiness, they become weak. Sometimes, the respect that students and disciples show teachers leads their mentors to overlook their own failings.

Jesus watched a poor [widow](#) among many worshipers who made cash contributions to the Temple in retribution to God for their past sins. The widow personified the uncountable poor. She who had nothing somehow found a way to give at least part of the little she had.

Humble people, even today, find a way to sacrifice part of their time, talent, and money to help those in need. Jesus notices and blesses those who share some part of the little they have. In Jesus' eyes, the small donations of the poor exceed those of wealthier people who hold tight to what they have. God favors the gifts of the poor because the poor give from what little they have to live on.

— *How do I make my own decisions about how much to share with the poor (often via my donations to my parish church and other charitable organizations)?*

— *When did I find myself as the one in need of aid from others? How did I feel about being on the receiving end of their generosity? What life-lessons have I learned from this?*

### **For Inspirational Viewing/Listening**

#### Video

[John Michael Talbot's reflection](#) on Mark 12: 38-44 (2.5 min.)

### **The Week Ahead**

#### Journaling Prompts

*Based on this weekend's Scripture readings, what does the Risen Christ ask me to do TODAY regarding . . .*

*(1) the quality of the love I bring to my personal relationships . . . and*

*(2) my life as an emissary of Christ, committed to bringing God's love to the people with whom I interact in person and on social media?*

*Who this week needs to hear from me some expression of love?*

*Who needs to receive from me a moment of laughter and personal concern?*

*Why do I hesitate?*

In light of this weekend's Scriptures, take time to write about events occurring in your life this week and what you see happening in the world.

### **Preview of Next Week's Scriptures**

33<sup>rd</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time

Daniel 12: 1-3 "I, Daniel, heard the word of the Lord."

Psalm 16: 5, 8-11 "I set the Lord ever before me."

Hebrews 10: 11-14, 18 "By one offering (Jesus) made perfect forever those who are being consecrated.

Mark 13: 24-32 "Heaven and earth will pass away, but my word will not pass away."

### **Closing Prayer**

*(edited and abridged for use here)*

#### **Prayer for a Generous Heart**

O God, from whom all good things come,  
you shower me with blessings.  
You also make me a steward of your world.

Give me a generous heart.  
Make me a cheerful giver.  
Fill me with desire to see the dawning  
of the kingdom of your Son, my Lord.  
Amen

Source: [Episcopal Diocese of York](#), UK

### Questions?

Send any questions or comments you might have to [algarrotto@comcast.net](mailto:algarrotto@comcast.net)

*Gender usage in writing: We are conscious of gender references to God in the Scripture texts. Often, attempts to rewrite these passages result in awkward sentence structures. We have left the biblical translations as they are but do our best to be inclusive in all other parts of the reflection.*

The Sunday readings are from [Christian Community Bible: Catholic Pastoral Edition](#)

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**Coming very, VERY soon!! *Inspector Javert: at the Gates of Hell***  
(a novel exploring "what happens *next*?" after death)