



Bringing Home the Word

Thirty-second Sunday in Ordinary Time (B)
November 7, 2021

God Notices Our Acts of Generosity

By Fr. Mark Haydu, LC

Elijah is quite bold. He finds this poor woman collecting sticks to make her “last supper” on earth. She has run out of money, food, and energy. Even so, the prophet asks her to prepare him a cake and, in exchange for her hospitality, he promises she will not run out until God sends rain again. In her faith and humility, she says yes, and gives away all that she had to live on. God blesses her generosity! Jesus observes something similar. A poor widow willingly gives all

she has when, without anyone noticing, she drops her coins in the donation basket. God always notices our acts of generosity and multiplies them into eternity.

The first part of the Gospel stands in contrast with these two mighty widows. It shows us how *not* to be apostles. Jesus chastises the scribes and teachers of the law for three defects in their religious practice: pride, greed, and showing off. They love public greetings and special seating at church and parties. Jesus goes even further by saying they use their authority to devour widow’s houses. Could Jesus’ irony be any starker? While the widow is giving her last coins, the priest is using it to devour her livelihood.

We may never see in this life how God blesses our small or large acts of love, prayer, and generosity. Yet, we should keep doing them, not to be seen or rewarded, but because we love God, and to love is always the right thing. God sees, and a great reward awaits us. +

Sunday Readings

1 Kings 17:10–16

The God of Israel, says: The jar of flour shall not go empty, nor the jug of oil run dry.

Hebrews 9:24–28

Christ...will appear a second time, not to take away sin but to bring salvation to those who eagerly await him.

Mark 12:38–44 or 12:41–44

[Jesus said,] “They have all contributed from their surplus wealth, but she...has contributed all she had, her whole livelihood.”

Jesus chastises the scribes for three defects in their religious practice: pride, greed, and showing off.

A Word from Pope Francis

Familiarity with the Lord, of Christians, is always in community. Yes, it is intimate, it is personal, but within the community. A familiarity without community, a familiarity without bread, a familiarity without the Church, without the people, without the sacraments, is dangerous.

—Homily, April 17, 2020



REFLECTION QUESTIONS



- Am I doing what I can do to help the poor and protect them?
- Is my piety and religiosity also expressed in charity and service?

The Joy of Natural Family Planning

By Kathleen M. Basi

In February, the airwaves will be filled with advertisements for chocolates, jewels, and roses. Valentine's Day is a secular celebration meant for the renewal of love—by which, of course, we mean being bewitched—swept away by something beyond our control.

It's a romantic idea, but infatuation is only the very tip of the iceberg called love. As Catholics, we've been blessed with a beautiful heritage. In a world reeling from the pain caused by the misuse of sexuality, the Church's teachings on marriage shine like a beacon of hope, pointing us toward a brighter future. Throughout its history, the Church has called upon married couples to be open to life—not to have as many children as possible but to remember that what God joined, we must not divide. In the case of the marital act, that means the unity of the couple cannot be separated from the potential to give life. In practical terms, it means using natural family planning (NFP). At its essence, this means reading the signs of fertility and infertility that God himself built into us as man and woman.

Although NFP is often dismissed as impractical and unreliable, most couples who have made the commitment attest that it has made their marriages stronger. There's a good reason for this: Successful NFP practice encourages team effort instead of placing the responsibility on one spouse. When husbands and wives communicate, good things tend to



happen. When they include God in their monthly discernment about family size, even greater things happen.

That's not to say NFP is without its challenges. Periodic abstinence requires sacrifice. Charting cycles requires a commitment to tracking fertility signs daily. Intimacy will often be planned instead of rising spontaneously.

Yet most NFP couples would say the sacrifices are worthwhile. Being intentional about physical intimacy keeps us focused on the needs of the other and prevents us from taking the gift for granted.

Living in tune with our sexuality—the deepest expression of our capacity to love as God loves—helps us better understand

what it means to be made in God's image. When we love our spouses fully, holding nothing back, we become happier and more secure in our marriages. And we rest in the knowledge that by avoiding unnecessary hormonal intervention, we are both protecting the health of the one we love and being good stewards of creation.

Maybe next February it will be time to give your spouse a different kind of Valentine's Day gift—the gift of yourself.+

For information from the Catholic Church on natural family planning (NFP), visit: <https://www.usccb.org/topics/natural-family-planning>

Natural family planning can make your marriage stronger.



Lord, I am grateful for your abundant gifts. Open my hands and heart that I may give my all in sharing your peace and love with the world.

—From *Grateful Meditations for Every Day in Ordinary Time*, Rev. Warren J. Savage and Mary Ann McSweeney

WEEKDAY READINGS

November 8–13

Monday, Weekday: Wis 1:1–7 / Lk 17:1–6


Tuesday, Dedication of the Lateran Basilica: Ez 47:1–2, 8–9, 12 / 1 Cor 3:9c–11, 16–17 / Jn 2:13–22

Wednesday, St. Leo the Great: Wis 6:1–11 / Lk 17:11–19

Thursday, St. Martin of Tours: Wis 7:22b–8:1 / Lk 17:20–25

Friday, St. Josaphat: Wis 13:1–9 / Lk 17:26–37

Saturday, St. Frances Xavier Cabrini: Wis 18:14–16; 19:6–9 / Lk 18:1–8

Bringing Home
the **Word** 

November 7, 2021

© 2021 Liguori Publications, a ministry of the Redemptorists. One Liguori Drive, Liguori, MO 63057. Scripture quotations in this publication are from the *New American Bible*, revised edition, © 2010, 1991, 1986, 1970 Confraternity of Christian Doctrine, Washington, DC. The Pope Francis quotation is used with permission and copyright © 2021 *Libreria Editrice Vaticana*. All rights reserved. 1-800-325-9521. Liguori.org.