

- One of the things I want to point out in the second reading is toward the end: “...*human beings die once, and after this the judgment...*”
- And so the Church teaches: “*Death is the end of man's earthly pilgrimage, of the time of grace and mercy which God offers him so as to work out his earthly life in keeping with the divine plan, and to decide his ultimate destiny...we shall not return to other earthly lives...There is no “reincarnation” after death.*” (CCC 1013)
- We see the eagle’s flight, the bear’s strength, the horse’s speed, a great man or woman’s abilities, and we envy such traits...wishing that we could share in them.
- This wishful thinking, I think, is why the idea of reincarnation came about in the first place.
- But...as scripture tells us today, and the Church affirms...that’s all it is: wishful thinking. God Himself in scriptures tells us that we only have this one life—to do well...or not. So let us make best use of it!

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- And in that doing well in life is the critical aspect of the simple justice of giving thanks to God for the many, many gifts that He showers upon us...and trust in Him.
 - That is an underlying principle of our readings today: Despite apparent difficulties, dangers and even hopelessness, trust in God’s care for you.
 - In our first reading we have the poor widow who trusted in the prophet of God Elijah—and thus trusts in God Himself—so completely that she gave her last bit of food to him.
 - Then, the widow in our Gospel who trusted God so completely as to give her last two coins to the temple...and thus to God.
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- It's interesting how, despite the fact that the world loudly applauds generosity and self-giving...and God teaches us that our charity help facilitate our Heavenly journey...we nonetheless tend to be very wary in giving for the greater good, and yet will spend a fortune on trips, entertainment, unecessaries.
- Yet...what is more necessary than our souls? And bringing others to discipleship in Jesus, and thus to the salvation He offers, elicits God's grace upon us more than anything else.
- All other is simply entertainment...but working for God is investment.
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- A good thing to remember this week for you who work at the lab because LANL begins is charitable giving campaign drive... something that assists our parish immensely with our maintenance, our programs, employee salaries, etc., especially if there is any sort of matching involved. I'm not sure if there is or not; if you know, let me know.
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- Scripture reminds us very plainly of the role of charity in cultivating the spiritual life: *"It is better to give alms than to treasure up gold. For almsgiving delivers from death, and it will purge away every sin. Those who perform deeds of charity and of righteousness will have fullness of life..."* (Tobit 12:8-9)
- ...and didn't we read of Jesus instructing the rich young man just a few weekends ago: *"If you would be perfect, go, sell what you possess and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow me."* (Matthew 19:21)

- ...remembering that the very mission of the Church—the reason for its existence, and thus of our discipleship—is the salvation of souls.
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- And besides aiding the poor and the needy with material goods, one of the greatest mercies and kindnesses we do is supporting both our parish and the larger Church in efforts to lead believers to a deeper connection with their spiritual good... to lead non-believers to discover Christ and God’s love for them, and strengthen the faith of those whose faith is weak.
- There is no greater act of charity and love we can assist.
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- As we know—and as Jesus tells us—God’s gifts are not for ourselves; we are simply stewards of His blessings...spiritual “storehouses”, as it were, to help those in need.
- This congregation especially has received blessings in great abundance...above the vast majority of the people on earth—in intellect, in the opportunity to exercise that intellect...in employment and in families.
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- Remembering this and God’s generosity to us, we can’t help but recall Jesus’ parable: *“There was a rich man who had a steward, [who] was wasting his goods. And he called him and said to him, ‘What is this that I hear about you? Turn in the account of your stewardship...’”* (Luke 16:1-2)
- A “steward” is defined as *a person who has charge of the household of another.*

- Well, the Church is the household of Christ...and Jesus established His Church—US—to spread His Word—the Gospel—of His salvation throughout the world.
 - This is our duty...our privilege... serving God in the support our local church—through material support, and through various ministries, through all the little chores needed to be done around ANY household.
 - For instance, St. Mother Teresa used to clean the bathrooms of every convent that she visited...to help her remember humility and service.
 - Because service to God is the greatest of our life's works by far; all else we do will be forgotten. But God takes eternal notes.
 - Serving and loving God and neighbor is why we exist...the very purpose for which He made us!
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 - So, as always, we look to Jesus for example and wisdom: “...*If anyone would be first, he must be last of all and servant of all.*” (Mark 9:35)...and also He—our savior and our God—says even of Himself: “...*the Son of man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.*” (Matthew 20:28)... serving us totally, completely and perfectly—upon the cross.
 - Should we, His disciples, not emulate His example?
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- So remember: Christ looks to us all to see how we aid His mission.
 - ...and without YOU, the children are not educated in the faith, buildings are not built or maintained, and, in worst case, the sacraments are not celebrated, as vocations to the priesthood are not supported. That's just our earthly existence and reality.

- So trust like the widows in our reading today, offering to God of yourselves generously...for which they were praised by Jesus Himself, immortalized in the Gospel for all time, and no doubt raised to eternal life.

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- *“[Jesus] said to them, ‘...give alms; provide yourselves with purses that do not grow old, with a treasure in the heavens that does not fail...For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.’”* (Luke 12:33-34)

Reading 1

[1 Kgs 17:10-16](#)

In those days, Elijah the prophet went to Zarephath.
As he arrived at the entrance of the city,
a widow was gathering sticks there; he called out to her,
"Please bring me a small cupful of water to drink."
She left to get it, and he called out after her,
"Please bring along a bit of bread."
She answered, "As the LORD, your God, lives,
I have nothing baked; there is only a handful of flour in my jar
and a little oil in my jug.
Just now I was collecting a couple of sticks,
to go in and prepare something for myself and my son;
when we have eaten it, we shall die."
Elijah said to her, "Do not be afraid.
Go and do as you propose.
But first make me a little cake and bring it to me.
Then you can prepare something for yourself and your son.
For the LORD, the God of Israel, says,
'The jar of flour shall not go empty,
nor the jug of oil run dry,
until the day when the LORD sends rain upon the earth.'"
She left and did as Elijah had said.
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

[Ps 146:7, 8-9, 9-10](#)

R. (1b) Praise the Lord, my soul!

or:

Alleluia.

The LORD keeps faith forever,
secures justice for the oppressed,
gives food to the hungry.

The LORD sets captives free.

R. Praise the Lord, my soul!

or:

Alleluia.

The LORD gives sight to the blind.

The LORD raises up those who were bowed down;
the LORD loves the just.

The LORD protects strangers.

R. Praise the Lord, my soul!

or:

Alleluia.

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.

R. Praise the Lord, my soul!

or: **Alleluia.**

Reading II

[Heb 9:24-28](#)

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.

Gospel

[Mk 12:38-44 or 12:41-44](#)

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."

or

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