



## BENEDICTINE SISTERS OF CHICAGO

Reflections for the 32<sup>nd</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time  
November 10, 2024  
Sister Patricia Coughlin

1Kgs 17: 10-16  
Ps 146: 7, 8-9, 9-10  
Heb 9: 24-28  
Mk 12: 38-44

Our scripture passages this morning focus on women. That's timely, given that women have had a prominent place in the 2024 election.

Today's first and third readings give us the stories of two courageous women who sacrifice their last resources to benefit others and answer God's call. Both are widows with little wealth and big hearts and they give something much better than money. They give everything they have.

Our first reading is one of a series of miracle stories in the Books of First and Second Kings that feature the prophet Elijah.

There is a severe famine in Sidon. There is no rain to water the crops and she does not have enough food to nourish herself and her young son.

Then the prophet Elijah shows up, and asks her to give him water and meal for "a bit of bread," and despite her poverty she complies. (Elijah's request seems a bit insensitive.) She gives him what he asks for despite her desperation.)

Elijah's response points to a miracle: "The God of Israel says, "The jar of flour shall not go empty, nor the jug of oil run dry until the Lord sends rain upon the earth."

This woman trusted the prophet who brought God's word to her, and her generosity was rewarded with abundance.

In the age of online giving with credit cards, we don't get a chance to know what other people are giving unless a charity web site publishes it. In Jesus' time an offering to the temple treasury was accompanied by the clinks of coins when the collection was taken and the bigger the offering the louder the clinks, that signaled that someone had made a large contribution.

It was only Jesus, sitting in the temple who noticed the poor widow putting two copper coins into the treasury. She gave the only resource she had to live on, despite the law that the poor were not required to donate to the temple and the sound of two small copper coins would be drowned out.

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But Jesus knew that two copper coins given out of poverty could exceed large sums given out of wealth. The widow was giving her whole life to the God of the temple while the scribes were exploiting the poor. She gave her all.

In our times there are 350 million people around the world, in our cities, and in our neighborhoods who live in dire poverty. We who have more than adequate resources can answer God's call to count our blessings and make some monetary sacrifices for the vulnerable among us, and to give our all to the people we encounter in everyday life. We can give them all of our attention, all our moments of listening with the ear of our heart, and the best of our caring.