

The usual thoughts in our minds and hearts during the Advent-Christmas season include the words: Expectation...Giving...Excitement...Promise...Fulfillment...among others.

# Tuesday December 15

1 Kings 17.8-16

In today's scripture from 1 Kings there are none of those words, except the reference that our God specializes in feeding the hungry and raising the dead. In the narrative we find Elijah, being sent to the Wadi Cherith for a meeting with Zarephath a widow, who has been commanded to feed him. Upon his arrival, Elijah finds the widow to be an unlikely source of hospitality, since she is short of food and is actually preparing for her own death and that of her son, because of the famine in that area. In fact, her response to his request for a little water and a morsel of bread, results in her issuing a statement that is not what he expected: "as the Lord Your God lives, I have nothing baked, only a handful of meal in a jar and a little oil in a jug. I am now gathering sticks for a fire so that I can prepare a meal for myself and my Son, that we can eat it and die." Elijah responds telling her not to be afraid, to make a little cake for him and then for herself, for God promises that the jar of meal will not go empty and the jug of oil will not fail. The widow is given new hope that nullifies her original death sentence.

How can we reflect on this story during the Advent season and our own level of concerns when facing difficult decisions and changes to our usual way of living? Most of us are not facing starvation or dying because of lack of food. Certainly there is the possibility of a death from the Covid-19 virus, certainly we may face a shortage of items in the market, certainly our jobs have been affected perhaps causing diminishing resources which could affect the number of presents under the tree, and we have an unknown future with probably more negative changes. So, what message can we take from our scripture as we plan to celebrate the great gift of God's son?

To me, it seems I need the story to reinforce the fact that God does not forget his people and knows every problem they are trying to resolve. He reaffirms to me that the jar will never be empty because I have a God who cares about me to the extent that he notices the loss of every sparrow. Once again God gave his people a promise from the outside, from Elijah, that the gift of salvation and relief will come. I think that maybe God is telling me and maybe you that he needs us outside people to tell his promises over and over again. It is a certainty that he is our road of hope always.

**Almighty God of us all, Father of us all, Creator of us all, who unselfishly gave us Jesus to teach us the lessons of life. Be with us in the glory of this season and also in the trials of our present time. Help us to truly believe your promises and not worry but know that you will keep every one. Jesus confirms that many times in our lives and we pray thankfully for his presence, for his love for his caring about us. Help us to celebrate this Christmas as we have done in the past, without regarding our individual situation, but knowing our jar will be filled with whatever we need. And all God's people say AMEN.**

*Roy Krasse*