

Ordinary Time 32B 2015
Trust in God

Today's liturgy challenges us to think about God in a new and different way. It calls into question the way in which we usually live our lives. It summons us to a new understanding of God that can be summarized in a single word, a word that we utter again and again, but we find difficult to put into practice. Today's liturgy challenges us to *trust* in God, to look upon God as the one who can and will provide for our needs.

The widow in today's first reading and the widow in today's gospel are outstanding examples of such trust. They, more than anyone else, trusted in God and understood who God is. And so, when the prophet Elijah asks the widow of Zarephath to prepare a meal for him, she uses her last handful of flour and the little oil she has even though she and her son are starving and about to die, because she trusts in God. Although she cannot understand how God will provide for her, she trusts that in God's way and God's time, all will be well. And so it is! Her jar of flour does not go empty; her jug of oil does not go dry.

In today's gospel, we hear the story of another woman who is also at the end of her resources. Although she lives in extreme poverty, she contributes all that she has to the temple treasury. Although she has little for herself, she gives what she has to others. And although she cannot afford to give the little she has, she gives all

she has. While our first inclination might be to say she is foolish and imprudent, and that she should save something for herself, this is not what Jesus says. Jesus sees her profound trust in God. Jesus knows that she, like the widow of Zarephath, has put all of her trust in God.

These two widows act as they do because they believe and trust in the power of God to save them. They understand that no matter what they save for themselves, they cannot save themselves. They understand that only God can save and protect them. And so from the little they have they give all they have, confident and full of trust that God will be faithful to them. God is their refuge and their strength. God is their hope and strong support. And so they trust and rely on the One, the only One, who can save them. They rely and trust on God.

Sometimes, when we trust in God, we hedge our bets. We keep something back for ourselves in case God will not provide! Sometimes, when we trust in God, we place conditions on our trust. I will trust and rely on God, if...! I will do what God asks of me, provided that At other times we trust and rely on God but we try to bring about what we need by our own means. But these two women trusted and relied on God without reservation. They withheld nothing from God, and so God withheld nothing from them. Like Jesus who gave of himself completely on the cross, they surrendered themselves completely to God; and God cared and provided for them.