

TENTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME, CYCLE C

Opening prayer: *Gracious and life-giving God, you raised the son of the widow of Naim and the son of the widow with whom Elijah was staying. Breathe more fully in us. May our breath remind us of your presence within us. You are the author and source of all life. We pray to you who live and reign now and forever. Amen.*

Sharing life: What are you most and least grateful for this week?

Facilitator reads focus statement: In the first reading and the Gospel, Elijah and Jesus raise a widow's son from the dead. Both readings demonstrate God's power over death. In the second reading, Paul shares with the Galatians his conversion story.

Read the assigned Scripture readings, pausing briefly after each one. Consider going over the commentary after each reading, if you have not done so prior to your meeting.

FIRST READING: 1Kings 17:17-24

The background to this reading has Elijah fleeing for his life from King Ahab and Queen Jezebel, and the widow of Zarephath offering to shelter the man of God. When the widow's son dies, she is at first convinced that the prophet's presence is responsible for his death. But after the son is restored to life, she gives testimony to the power of God at work in the prophet's word. *The power of God is the real theological point of this narrative*, underlined time and again in many other tales of the miraculous power at work through the prophets.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM 30

This is a psalm of praise and thanksgiving by one whom the Lord has rescued from the brink of disaster. Its reference being "brought up from the netherworld" makes this text a perfect complement to the theme of resurrection from the dead found in the first reading and the Gospel.

SECOND READING: Galatians 1:11-19

This is a precious reading because it has Paul sharing with us his conversion story. Paul defends himself against the accusations of the Judaizers (those seeking to convert Gentile Christians to Jewish ways) who question his preaching credentials. Paul points out that his call is the result of divine intervention ("by a revelation from Jesus Christ"), and not of human origin.

GOSPEL: Luke 7:11-17

This is one of several stories only found in Luke's Gospel. Two Lucan themes appear in this reading: Jesus' compassion and his outreach to women. With the death of his only son, the widow would have faced economic disaster. The story is also a manifestation of both the humanity and the divinity of Christ. As a human being, he shows great compassion for a woman in need. As God, he manifests his power over death, our last and greatest enemy. Because of his compassion and divinity, we can look to Jesus with great confidence.

FAITH-SHARING QUESTIONS

1. What verse spoke to you and why?
2. What do you think is most painful about being a widow?
3. What can help folks to recover from the loss of a child?
4. What can lift our spirits when all seems lost?

RESPONDING TO THE WORD

Name one way you can act on today's readings.

CONCLUDE WITH PRAYERS OF PETITION AND INTERCESSION

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