

God can NEVER be outdone in generosity. Are you and I willing to take leaps of faith, by being generous?

Today's First reading and Gospel both are about widows who take leaps of faith, by being generous. Then, we see that God is NEVER outdone in generosity.

The first reading is about the widow of Zarephath. Elijah promises that God will take care of her and her son, IF... she uses her last supply of food to feed him! She takes a leap of faith, and being generous with Elijah. Then, God provides food for her and for her son for a whole year, from a jar of flour and a jug of oil that don't run out! God can NEVER be outdone in generosity.

In the Gospel, ANOTHER widow takes a leap of faith, by being generous with God. She gives her last two coins to God, her whole livelihood. She knows that her money really belongs to God. She trusts that God will somehow take care of her. Does Jesus say it was reckless and irresponsible, poor financial planning? No! He praises her for her generosity! Since God can NEVER be outdone in generosity, we can be confident that God provided for that widow.

Throughout our lives, God calls each of US to take leaps of faith by being generous. God calls us to be generous with our **neighbors**, to help them out. *I have MANY neighbors in Uby who have shared home-cooked food and vegetables with me. I love hearing how some people are generous with their neighbors, mowing their grass, or plowing their driveway.*

God calls us to be generous with our **parish family**, with our time, talent, and treasure.

God calls us to be generous with the **charities in our diocese**, through donating to Christ's Mission Appeal.

This week is National Vocations Awareness Week. God calls people to the vocations of marriage, priesthood, and consecrated life. Each vocation is a path to generosity, to becoming more generous.

God calls couples to the vocation of marriage, which requires a leap of faith, including vows to be generous to one another, to choose to love in good times and in bad. Once they are married, He calls them to be generously open to new life, to take the leap of faith of welcoming children, and HE calls some parents ALSO to welcome children through foster care or adoption.

God calls single people to seriously consider and pray about what vocation He might be calling them to, to ask, "Lord, what is my vocation?" In our parish and every

parish, God is calling some of our young men to take the leap of faith to check out the vocation to **priesthood**, and some of the young women to check out the **consecrated life**, and MOST of the young people to check out the vocation to marriage, through dating relationships that are pure and Christ-centered.

Many years ago, God called me to take a leap of faith and check out the vocation to priesthood. How did God call me? I heard His voice calling me through the voices of relatives, parishioners, through Bishop Carlson who invited me to join the Saginaw Diocese, through Bishop Cistone who ordained me, and especially through the voice of Christ Himself in the scripture.

Why do I love being a priest? First, because I am cooperating with Christ in His mission of saving souls, first, my own, then your souls, then the souls of everyone in our parish boundaries.

I love being a priest because I get to SHOW THE FACE OF CHRIST to others. I know that just by being a priest, I remind people of Christ. *Yesterday I went with two other parish family members to the Holly Berry Fair in Caseville High School. There were lots of vendors selling crafts. We had a booth, and set up a table with rosaries and medals and brochures. I think people were not expecting to see a priest hocking rosaries! Some people who stopped at our booth asked us to pray for them, and we prayed over some on the spot. Some began to tear up when we asked God to bless them and help them.*

Pope St. John Paul the Great said, "No one can see Christ; but everyone sees the priest, and through him they wish to catch a glimpse of the Lord!" That is my goal, that through me, people would catch a glimpse of Christ. This should ALSO be the goal for YOU and for EVERY every Christian, that when people look at you, they should catch a glimpse of Christ.

I love being a priest because I get to SHOW THE FACE OF CHRIST through prayer and the sacraments. In the sacraments I lend my voice and my hands to Christ.

In Confession, I lend Christ my voice, cooperating with Him in healing people from shame and guilt, sometimes after decades.

In Mass, I lend Christ my voice and hands to consecrate the bread and wine, which I offer to the Father, along with myself, for the salvation of souls.

In Anointing, I lend Christ my voice and hands to heal people. There's always spiritual healing, healing from fear, and sometimes there's also physical healing.

In Baptism, I lend Christ my voice and hands, who baptizes through me, beginning their path to salvation. *Once I baptized an older woman on her deathbed in the hospital,*

and she was overwhelmed with joy. It was an amazing honor and privilege to prepare her to meet Christ face to face!

As a priest I also get to SHOW THE FACE OF CHRIST TO OTHERS through the works of mercy, like visiting the sick and homebound.

I love being a priest because I get to not just SHOW the fact of Christ, but also to SEE the face of Christ in so many people. I get to meet and talk to so many different people, and each person is interesting, each person is a unique reflection of God's beauty, each person is God's masterpiece.

I get to meet people when I hatch 'em, match 'em, and dispatch 'em.... at baptisms, weddings, and funerals. But also, I like meeting people at community events.

One group of people that I really like meeting with is other priests. I organize our thumb bistro dinners every month. We share lots of stories about ministry, and some of them are hilarious.

Being a priest, being a Christian, gives us many chances to take leaps of faith by being generous. Every time I have taken the leap, and I bet you would say the same thing, God shows me that He can never be outdone in generosity.

Announce: I'm the new regional vicar;

Parish Mission and Man of the Shroud exhibit;

Vocations prayer card