

The main thing that comes to my mind from today's readings, ultimately I think, is service. There's a strong focus on vocation here and religious service, I think. We begin with Elisha, a prophet. As we know, prophets never have easy lives. They give up much for God. They preach hard truths. It costs them friendships, and luxuries, and pleasures, and all sorts of things. And yet, we also see here a woman of influence who appreciates that. She does what she can to show him kindness, and we see how appreciative he is. She receives a great reward: a son.

In the Gospel, as I look at Christ telling us these hard things, I think primarily of a vocation because I have one as a priest. Maybe I'm biased in my interpretation here, but he talks about loving God more than father or mother. More than son or daughter. More than family. Taking up your cross, losing your life to find it, it's just filled with sacrifice. And speaking only for myself, there are days when that's quite hard. And when someone shows me kindness, because of this, I can't even begin to tell you how appreciative I am. Sometimes, there's nowhere to rest my head, so when someone, figuratively, provides me a room and a place to stay, it's quite nice. And Christ conveys this too, in His own life. He sacrificed so much for us, and He suffers. And when someone shows Him even the smallest kindness, it means a lot to Him, and so He says here, along with the sacrifice, those who help those who make these sacrifices will receive a reward. If you receive a prophet because he's a prophet, you'll get a prophet's reward. Or a righteous man as a righteous man, you get that reward. Or even a cup of cold water to refresh the tongue and the spirit, you'll receive that in return too. Prophets primarily teach. If you receive the teaching of prophets, you'll receive their reward, which is teaching. You will understand the mysteries of the kingdom, and that's no small gift. If you receive a righteous man and his justice and goodness and morality, you'll be given graces to live a good and holy life, also not a small reward. So God tells us here, not just for those with vocations to priesthood of course, but to everyone, sacrifices are necessary for life. But don't be disheartened by that on difficult days, because you are rewarded by God, and He will send people your way who will see it and appreciate it and give you something to help you along the way. So primarily, I see sacrifice and service in today's readings.

With all of that being said, focusing upon service, I also wanted to make an announcement today to you for a decision I've made for the parish. I've been here almost a year now. July will make a year, and I love it here, incidentally. I still feel like I just got here, and it has been very good, other than plagues and things. It's been a good year. Since I arrived here, I have had people in the parish asking me if I would ever consider doing a Latin Mass on a Sunday. And it's been quite consistent, and so I think I'm going to do it. And I want to explain why, not just because of the consistency of the questions, but because I wish to serve you.

When Pope Benedict talked about the Latin Mass, he put out this document that explained what he wanted us to understand about it, and in this document, he also said to every priest if your parish has a group of people that asks you for it, really in obedience, you ought to provide it. And beyond just obedience, he talked about how it teaches and enriches, or it can to those who are open to it. But I also wish to do it beyond obedience, as a gift. I think this parish knows it

better than maybe some other parishes. We've had it here in the evening during the week and every first Saturday, so there's exposure and some understanding.

I learned how to celebrate both rites of the Mass in my seminary formation, though I never really practiced the Latin Mass for a long time. When I began to do it, at the request of some of my people in my last parish, it was a steep learning curve, to say the least, but I found Christ in it. Definitely as a priest, it did. It enriches my understanding of my faith, and of the current form of Mass, and it is imbued with great beauty.

For anyone who maybe has not been to it, or has qualms about it, for the moment at least, I would just say this: whoever receives a prophet, receives a prophet's reward. If you receive it as a gift, you will receive a great reward. The Lord reveals Himself at every Mass. In the Latin Mass, there are differences and so there are different things to receive there, I think.

So overall I would simply ask you to be open to receiving the gift. As time goes on, I will explain more about it, and I will give you resources. In a way, I'm kind of learning it along with you, because even if I have celebrated as a priest here, if you come to those Masses, you will see that I have a cheat sheet because there's a lot to memorize. And I've never done it on a Sunday, so in a way, I'm kind of happy about that, that I'm learning it along with you. So I will be patient. Be patient with me. But I think it will enrich the parish, and if you're open to it, there will be many graces offered to you.

So my aim is at the end of the month, on the last weekend, July 26, I'll replace the 11:30 Mass with a Latin Mass and I will see how it goes. I will see if there are as many people who want it, as many as I think do want it. I'll see how it goes. I would ask you for your prayers with that. I really don't wish to lose anybody, nor do I wish to irritate anybody, but I know that even beyond the Latin Mass thing, changing a Mass schedule is not always accepted well, so I ask for your prayers and patience on that.

But at the very least, understand that I do it out of obedience and service to you and to my church, and I think if you receive it well, you'll receive a good reward.