

Commentary on the Gospel for Mon, Nov 25th 2013

St. Catherine of Alexandra, who is remembered in today's liturgy, is one of the revered group of women known as the virgin martyrs: a group who were bright, strong, and steadfast in their adherence to Christianity and to their virginity, which eventually brought them martyrdom. In the Middle Ages, a cult grew up around Catherine; one of its stories was that her body, having been tortured and mutilated by her oppressors, was born by angels to Mt. Sinai.

In the First Reading, Daniel makes a plea for his own simple food and drink in place of food and wine from the King's table. He and three others had been chosen from among their brothers to prepare for special service at the court. When cajoled by the king to "Eat up," he persisted in his choice for simple fare. Eventually, it was determined that he and his group were healthier than the others and more fit for their special assignment.

Finally, in the Gospel, Christ makes a point to notice a poor widow who can afford no more than a few coins for her temple offering. Christ notes that she gave from her poverty, not her wealth.

We are at the beginning of Thanksgiving Week. It occurs to me that these readings can be sources for prayer as many of us in the United States prepare for this special feast and family gathering. St. Catherine's example might prompt a few moments of reflection on what ARE the most important things of life and what are we willing to do to protect them?

Daniel and his friends demonstrate that simple foods can make us more healthy and more able to undertake what life has to offer.

Next, the widow's offering is a reminder to give some attention to the billions in our world who will not be feasting on Thursday and reach out to them. For example, the web site of Catholic Relief Services offers a very easy process to quickly donate to the money they are raising to assist the thousands of typhoon victims in the Philippines.

And finally, let's try to spend some quiet time reflecting on our gifts, especially a few that did not immediately present themselves to us as gifts, and the Gift Giver!

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