

Daily Homily

Week Eleven in Ordinary Time, Thursday

18 June 2020

[USCCB Daily Reading](#)

Yesterday we said goodbye to the great prophet, Elijah. Today the Church provides for us, through the Book of Sirach, Elijah's obituary. And what an obituary it is! Unlike anything you may read from a newspaper or from an online funeral home's website, Elijah's obituary is bold and poetic.

- He was born as fire
- His words were heated
- He took from the mighty on earth
- He commanded the heavens above
- He raised the dead
- He brought to death unbridled, tyrant kings and nobles
- He confronted threats to his people
- He brought to power passionate, helpful kings
- He was taken up in a whirlwind of chariots and fiery horses
- He turn sons' hearts back to their fathers
- He brought right relationship to the family of Israel
- To call him friend, is to live in peace
- Elisha he called, and he followed
- Elijah's wisdom transferred and nothing was beyond Elisha's power
- In life Elijah performed wonders
- In death, marvelous deeds

And again, the Psalm response is appropriate to Elijah's obituary: Rejoice in the Lord, you just! Elijah can certainly rejoice in the Lord for all his just deeds, now and for eternity.

It takes me back to a question and a quote I recently heard: "Do you live your resume or your obituary?" I read many obituaries. Usually they give some solid facts about date of birth, family connections, places of work. All of that is interesting, and it is good information to know. However, on rare occasion in an obituary it may go a bit further. It may tell of someone's faith and devotion, to not only family or employer, but also to God. On rare occasion the obituary may mention how the individual prayed or what they prayed for with their life.

The Carmelite community have this custom (I think they still do this) when a sister dies they write, not just an obituary, but a rather extensive biography. It is usually several pages long, a small book even. They distribute this biography to all the Carmelite Monasteries within their district so that people come to know more completely their fellow community members and so that the deceased is remembered in prayer. Actually, one reason the Carmelite sister, St. Therese of Lisieux, became so popular is because the autobiography that her Mother Superior told her to write became the work that was circulated to all the monasteries upon her death. The work was so extensive and spoke to so many hearts that the other communities shared her biography with those not in their community, but who came to them searching for spiritual help and support. "The Story of a Soul" was, in some sense, St. Therese's obituary – that she, herself, wrote!

Do you live your resume or your obituary? *Memento Mori* (Remember death). It is not meant to be morbid, but actually sobering. Many saints adopted this phrase into their prayer life and into their way of being. It helps us live courageously and without regret. It helps to live like Elijah and like Elijah, to be remembered in death, boldly and poetically.