

Elijah & the Widow

1 Kings 17:8-15

After some time, however, the brook ran dry, because no rain had fallen in the land. So the LORD said to him: "Move on to Zarephath of Sidon and stay there. I have designated a widow there to provide for you." He left and went to Zarephath. As he arrived at the entrance of the city, a widow was gathering sticks there; he called out to her, "Please bring me a small cupful of water to drink." She left to get it, and he called out after her, "Please bring along a bit of bread." "As the LORD, your God, lives," she answered, "I have nothing baked; there is only a handful of flour in my jar and a little oil in my jug. Just now I was collecting a couple of sticks, to go in and prepare something for myself and my son; when we have eaten it, we shall die." "Do not be afraid," Elijah said to her. "Go and do as you propose. But first make me a little cake and bring it to me. Then you can prepare something for yourself and your son.

For the LORD, the God of Israel, says, 'The jar of flour shall not go empty, nor the jug of oil run dry, until the day when the LORD sends rain upon the earth.'" She left and did as Elijah had said. She was able to eat for a year, and he and her son as well.

Praying For Vocations

The purpose of the Elijah Cup, a consecrated chalice, is to provide a focal point for prayer.

We are all aware of the need for vocations to the priesthood, the diaconate and to the religious life. But sometimes we forget just how powerful praying for an increase in vocations can be. If we pray with the faith of the widow of Zarephath, our cup will never run dry! We will always have priests to bring us Jesus in the Eucharist.

In 1 Kings 17, during a drought, Elijah tells the poor widow of Zarephath that if she makes him a small loaf of bread with the last of her flour and oil, her "*jar of flour will not go empty, nor the jug of oil run dry, until the Lord sends rain upon the earth.*" In faith, the widow baked the bread and fed Elijah. For the next year, the widow, her son, and Elijah ate bread made from the bowl of flour and jug of oil.

The 2nd Vatican Council instructs us that it is the job of the laity to pray for and rise up vocations, and this has been echoed by Pope John Paul II in many of his teachings.

The Elijah Cup

Each week at Sunday Mass the Celebrant will use the Elijah Cup as the chalice or a Precious Blood cup. After purifying the Elijah Cup at the end of Communion, the Celebrant calls a family, individual, or couple forward to receive the Elijah Cup. They receive a blessing and take the Elijah Cup home, putting it in a place of honor. Because the "Elijah Cup" has been blessed and dedicated to be exclusively used for holding the Precious Blood of Christ, it would never be used outside of Mass for any other purpose other than being a focal point of prayer at home. Each day for a week, during prayer time, they pray for an increase and perseverance of vocations. The following Sunday they return the Elijah Cup with the gifts of bread and wine at the Offertory.

A "Prayer Basket" also accompanies the Elijah Cup. This prayer basket contains a prayer journal, specific prayers for an increase in vocation, Rosary beads and a Scriptural Recitation of the Rosary for each mystery specifically designed for an increase in vocations and other material. Each week the family, individual, or couple that has the chalice may enter a thought, prayer, or scripture verse into the journal. For example, participants may write an entry into the journal for prayers for specific seminarians, or those preparing to take vows in specific religious orders. Over time, this diary becomes a spiritual journal for the parish.

All families, couples, and individuals interested in participating should contact Debbie Adsit at 908-451-1249 or email at elijahcup@sjanj.net

**PRAYING FOR VOCATIONS IS THE MOST POWERFUL WAY TO
SUPPORT VOCATONS!**