

Communion: 1Kings 17

I'm sure that we have all experienced the joy of feeding birds and of giving to needy widows either directly or indirectly through a charity. It would be rare indeed to have the situation reversed and be fed by the birds or by someone in dire straits. However, when God intervenes things are usually turned topsy-turvy.

The prophet Elijah seemed to come out of nowhere and predicted to Ahab, an evil king of Israel, that there would be a prolonged drought in the land and it would not be lifted until the right words were spoken by God through the prophet. Elijah then left to hide in the Wadi Cherith, east of the Jordan. He would drink of the stream and be fed by the ravens who were commanded by God to assist him. Each morning and evening the ravens brought



bread and meat and the pure water of the stream satisfied his thirst. Not many people have experienced that kind of room service! Not many people have experienced that kind of communion with nature! Imagine, breaking bread with the birds. (Sounds like something Francis of Assisi would do.)

The brook eventually ran dry and Elijah went to Zarephath where he met a poor widow. She shared her last handful of flour and drops of oil with Elijah and baked him a little cake. God's response to her generosity was that her jar of flour and jug of oil would not go empty.

During this three and a half year famine the great prophet of Israel was fed by ravens and a poor widow of Zarephath near Sidon. In either case the servers of such a holy man were probably not judged worthy according to religious tradition. Imagine, breaking bread with some shabbily dressed old woman! (Reminds me of Jesus, a Jew, taking water from a Samaritan woman.) But the holy man of God accepted his humble servers and even blessed the widow by bringing her son back to life.

I once heard a Catholic layman exclaim so confidently on a television program that lay Eucharistic ministers are not worthy servers in the Church and their privileges should be revoked.

I wonder if a visit to the Wadi Cherith and Zarephath would give him another perspective.