

Homily based on the readings from June 9, 2026 (1 Kings 17.7-16;
Matthew 5.13-16)

A large portion of our childhood is spent developing a fixed set of ideas about how the world works. At a very young age, we begin to discover the basic realities of life – water is wet, ice is cold, fire is hot. As we grow older, we start making more sophisticated observations – about the laws that govern the physical world and the behavior of individuals, institutions, and societies. Once or twice in our lifetime, we may encounter a technological innovation or a cultural development that truly *astounds* us, but – for the most part – once we reach adulthood, our fundamental worldview is never *seriously* challenged.

Today's first reading, from the First Book of Kings, presents a situation where there is absolutely no doubt about what *ought* to happen. A hapless trio – an outcast prophet, along with a desperately poor widow and her son – are trying to subsist on a handful of food, in the midst of a massive drought. By any *reasonable* standard, they should all be dead

within a week. Nevertheless, by the grace of God, they persist for an entire year: “the jar of flour did not go empty, nor the jug of oil run dry.”

Holy Scripture, of course, records a number of similar incidents. King Jehoshaphat, under the guidance of the Prophet Elisha, found enough water in a dry stream-bed to provide for his entire army. The Lord sustained the entire nation of Israel, “about six hundred thousand men on foot, not counting the children,” as they wandered for forty years in the desert. The most celebrated example, of course, is Our Lord feeding the five thousand with only five loaves and a pair of fish. All of these events challenge our cherished preconceptions about economics and agriculture, about abundance and scarcity – about what human beings require to survive.

The overarching point, of course, is that God is not bound by worldly certainties. Whether we are talking about the manner in which human beings are conceived, the actions we take to stay alive, or the ultimate

finality of death – all the “rules” we have come to accept are irrelevant in God’s eyes. He will do whatever he wants, whenever he wants, however he wants – all for the sake of his beloved children.

Part of God’s reason for undermining what we *think* we know is to prevent us from taking credit for accomplishments that are not our own.

As Saint Paul reminds us:

God chose the foolish of the world to shame the wise, and God chose the weak of the world to shame the strong, and God chose the lowly and despised of the world, those who count for nothing, to reduce to nothing those who are something, so that no human being might boast before God. (1 Corinthians 1.27-29)

Regardless of how educated or intelligent we imagine ourselves to be, the sum total of human knowledge – when viewed from God’s perspective – amounts to nothing more than the babbling of a baby. In the end, none of the certainties by which we live our lives have any lasting value. All that matters – in this world or the next – is that we

surrender ourselves, willingly and joyfully, to the wisdom, love, and mercy of Jesus Christ.