

THE EXAMPLE OF ELEAZAR/ ST. MARGARET OF SCOTLAND (OPT. MEMORIAL); TUESDAY, 16 NOVEMBER, 2021, WEEK 33, YEAR I.

2 MACCABEES 6:18-31; PSALM 3; LUKE 19:1-10

The First Reading of today is a long narrative about the courageous example of a man named Eleazar, who chose death rather than prolonging his life by compromising his faith.

Eleazar taught us many things through the reasoning he used to inform this decision.

- A. Eleazar taught us that death may be undesirable but it is better to choose death than to disappoint God.
- B. Eleazar taught us that we may be able to escape human punishment but no one can escape divine judgment and it is better to be punished and hated by people rather than to offend God and dare His wrath. Many are those who offend God because they don't want to offend people. That's a very poor and eventually regrettable judgement.
- C. Eleazar taught us that a life of integrity is better than long life, riches and power.
- D. Eleazar taught us that a life lived for others is a richer life than a life of self-absorption.
- E. From Eleazar we learn to always think about others when making decisions and to consider the implications of our actions on them. We must be deliberately careful of actions or examples that can scandalise other people or lead them astray.

In case we have not been careful enough, and maybe we haven't lived a life of integrity or we have led people astray, it is never too late. We don't have to spend the rest of our lives in guilt. Jesus is a sin and guilt gatherer.

Today the guilt gatherer met the tax-gatherer. Jesus sought Zacchaeus, forgave him and restored him. He also seeks to forgive all those of us who recognise our need for mercy and grace.

Today is the optional memorial of St. Margaret of Scotland (1046 - 1093).

She was born in Hungary to Anglo-Saxon and Hungarian parents. When William of Normandy conquered England, she found refuge with King Malcolm III of Scotland. They were married in 1070 and had eight children. She reformed the royal court, founded monasteries, and supported major reforms of Church life. She died in Edinburgh on November 16, 1093.

She is remembered for the happiness of her marriage, for her devotion to prayer and learning, and especially for her generosity to the poor.

Elizabeth lived for others. She lived a life of integrity and she left us an example worthy of emulation. May her prayers help us as we are strengthened by her example.