

NOVEMBER 16 2024 DEACON ROBERT KINGHORN

Well, today we celebrate the Feast of St. Margaret of Scotland, and as I often do, I remind you that we pray for saints because we respect their lives, but also to remind us of how we should live our lives as well. St. Margaret was an English princess, and she was brought up in Hungary and taught by the Benedictines, so for much of her life, she lived the Benedictine model about work and prayer. She ended up in Scotland because she was shipwrecked and married the King of Scotland. Now, marrying a king doesn't make you a saint, but it makes you a queen. So, she was Queen of Scotland. But she wasn't a queen that would stay in her own palace.

Tradition has it, as Father mentioned, she always reached out to the poor in society, calling them even every day. They could come into the king's palace, and she would sit with them, wash their feet, and feed them. Those who were least in their lowly, and even prisoners, would come to her. She became known as someone who loved the poor, knew their names, and was with them. In fact, if you go to Scotland, there's a stone close to where she lived called the Listening Stone, St. Margaret's Stone, where people would just walk. She would wait for them to come, and come and just listen to them. They'd talk about their lives and how she could help them. She had this great, great love for the poor and those around her.

There was a bishop, Bishop Untener from Saginaw, Michigan, who once said something I'll always remember. He said we, as a Church, have to go out of our way to find the poor. Because we don't bump into them usually at the grocery store. They don't go around in our circles of friends, and you don't find them on parish councils or parish committees. Often, we find people sitting around who are not the poor and the lowly, and we're speaking on their behalf. So, Bishop Untener was saying they should be with us in these groups, these committees, and speak for themselves. We've got to give them that voice. This is

what Margaret always did. She gave the poor and lowly a voice and listened to them.

There's another friend, Rick Tobias, who once talked about scripture and said there's a thousand references in scripture to the poor. Another thousand speak of justice and the call of justice in scripture. Another thousand talk about injustice in the land and its impact upon people. So, he said, that is 3,000 verses—more or less the same as we have in all of the gospels together. And he said, you know, that's why I, this Rick Tobias, was called to work with the poor. Because, he said, with all of these verses in scripture talking about it, I know when I go to die and meet God, God is going to say, "So, what did you do for the poor?" And if I say, "Nothing," He'd say, "Didn't you read my book?"

This is what brought him as well. And I think for all of us, isn't this what we're called to be and to do? To be people who are always including those who are poor, listening to those who are poor, those who don't have a voice in society. Just like St. Margaret of Scotland. But we have to go out of our way to find them very often because they're often ashamed of who they are, and people look down upon them. So, like St. Margaret of Scotland, we have to go out.

I went to a place in the city here, a place we called a listening post. It was a little house, and we said, "Come in, and we will listen to you." So, we sat there. There was always someone there each day, and people would come off the street, just talk about their problems, and of someone who would listen to them. This is in the model of St. Margaret of Scotland, who taught us how to do this. By her own life, she was always there. The king she married was called a tempestuous king. You can imagine what that's like with a king being tempestuous. But she, by her saintliness, by being with her husband—not preaching to him, not arguing with him—but he did a lot for the Church even though he wasn't a Catholic. He did so much for the Church because of his love for St.

Margaret of Scotland, who showed him how he should be with other people.

So, this is a great saint whose feast day we celebrate today. And I think we can all sort of sit back and say, “How does that remind me of who I should be in my life?” When we meet people, don’t just walk by as if we don’t know them. Say “hello.” Ask, “How are you today?” and have a response to that. Today in the gospel, we heard how the judge could go and help this widow. He was the one that was able to do that, and yet he sat back and listened, saying, “Well, let someone else do that.” I think we say in the world, “Why is there not more justice in the world? Why doesn’t God do something about all the injustice? If I were God, I would do that.”

But isn’t it true? Just as the lawyer in the gospel said, “Oh, I’m the one that’s got the power to do that.” I think this is what St. Margaret of Scotland is teaching us today. When we have these moments, when we think about injustice in the world, we have to look around and say, “What am I called to do about it? How am I called to go out and be with people who are hurting? Even in the streets of our city, even our neighbors next door, those who are sick, the least and the lowly. How can I be with them?”

See, we’re all called, like St. Margaret, to do justice. To be the ones, and that’s why I think we come to this Eucharist together, isn’t it? Because we know we need help with that. We know we need that strength within ourselves to go out and be with people, to sit with them and listen to their problems, be with them. So, I think this is why today we’re coming to celebrate. When Jesus is with us, He gives us His strength. He knows our weakness, but when we call upon the Lord Jesus, He is the one who gives us the strength. The strength as we unite ourselves with Jesus and this Eucharist. He comes to us and says, “I am here for you, the least and the lowly. I’ll always be with you. Come to Me.”

Just as St. Margaret did, we thank the Lord for that great grace.