

## FROM THE PASTOR

Dear Brothers and Sisters



*'Simon's mother-in-law lay sick with a fever. He approached, grasped her hand, and helped her up. Then the fever left her and she waited on them'.*

Nowhere in the Gospels is Simon Peter's wife mentioned. The fact that he had a mother in law means he must have had a wife. But why is she not mentioned? Because she had already died. Simon Peter was a widower, thus he had a mother in law, but no wife.

In southern Italy it is common to see widows dressed in black. You cannot enter the house of a widow without seeing a photograph of the deceased husband, with flowers and a votive candle lit. Widows have experienced death, and because of this they can be witnesses of the Resurrection.

The chrism of widows was very important in the Early Church, and remains so today.

The prophetess Anna was a widow, she was married only seven years before losing her husband, after which she never left the Temple, serving God night and day with fasting and prayer. She was eighty four years old when she finally saw the Christ child.

It was only the widow Anna, and the widower Simeon, who recognized Jesus when he was presented in the Temple. Nobody else knew who the child was, but the widows did. Anna, on seeing Jesus, began to praise God, and she spoke of the child to all who looked forward to the deliverance of Jerusalem.

The widow has a capacity for prayer and for charity that is essential in the life of the Church. Widows have perception, discernment and a prophetic word. The presence and the witness of widows is essential in any faith community. They make present the fact that death, grief and mourning are not the last word. There is one in our midst who has conquered death itself, and who allows us to participate in His Paschal Mystery. May we always value, esteem, and honor the widows in our families and in our Parish community.

Fr. Sean