

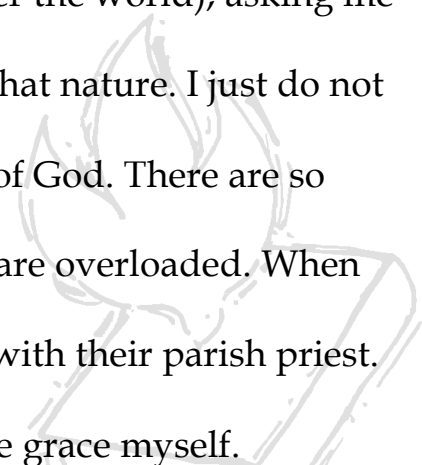
Homily
28th Sunday OT – C
Rev. Peter G. Jankowski
October 14-15, 2025

2 Kgs 5: 14-17
Ps 98: 1, 2-3, 3-4
2 Tm 2: 8-13
Lk 17: 11-19

Beloved Lord, thank you for life, thank you! Thank you for the life of Father Peter Jankowski. He is in your hands, Lord; you have control. Come to his aid and you will be with him at all times for his health, strength, and wisdom, Lord, you provide everything for him. Take care of his spirituality and holiness. Always place that joy in the hearts of Deacon Roberto Rivas and for Father Peter Jankowski. May that Divine grace shepherd your flock.

Gracias por la vida del Padre Peter Jankowski. Señor, él está en tus manos; tú tienes el control. Ven en su ayuda y estarás con él en todo momento para su salud, fortaleza y sabiduría. Señor, tú provees todo para él. Cuida su espiritualidad y santidad. Pon siempre esa alegría en los corazones del Diácono Roberto Rivas y del Padre Peter Jankowski. Que la gracia divina pastoree a tu rebaño.

In the course of my ministry, there are a lot of people that come to me from all over the diocese (and sometimes all over the world), asking me for special prayers and blessings and things of that nature. I just do not feel like you should deny anyone the blessings of God. There are so many priests around the world and all of them are overloaded. When people are coming to me, I try to connect them with their parish priest. But if that does not work, I try to take care of the grace myself.



In one particular case, in my last parish, there was a family who asked me for help many times over. This family endured the same kinds of problems that so many families in this country do, especially when it comes to immigration. I am not a politician; I believe that you minister to the person in front of you, no matter who they are. As a priest, I do not play Democrat or Republican. What I play in this role is a servant of God. I am nothing but a useless servant; I am doing what God has asked me to do (this was last week's homily). If you come in front of me and if you are asking me for grace, I will not deny grace from you because that is the gospel message.

I also realize that many people who receive this grace will not come back to say "thank you." Once people get what they need, they go away and do not come back. The few that DO come back is a blessing to me but ministry is not supposed to be about receiving thanks for doing God's will. Ministry is not supposed to be about getting paid back. That is theme in today's gospel of Luke. If we do this right, we are not looking for people to pay you back for the grace that you offer. You are supposed to be offering the Lord's grace freely, lovingly and without

recompense, without any kind of reward for what you are doing. For this reason, when people ask me, “How much money do you want for a wedding or a baptism?” My common response is that if I wanted to get rich, I would become the diocesan lawyer, not the priest.

As I was living through the life of ministry this week, there has been a great deal of hardship, a lot of people that have come to me with me and a lot of crying and suffering that goes on in the world. Especially the week I am recording these Masses, life for this priest has been very difficult. some of the things that have happened, as we will discuss somewhere down the line, that have *not* been good. Because so many people are suffering in our local communities, we just keep plotting on and trying to do what we can to help others in God’s name, knowing that there is a lot of evil in the world.

In one particular case this last week, a father had written me a letter and sent me pictures of me offering ministry with them in the past. This person really needed me to help them out a few years ago. They wrote a letter to me in Spanish; I translated it into English. This is the letter...

Dear Father Pete, I hope this letter finds you well and blessed. With humility and confidence, I write seeking your guidance and support during a very difficult time for me and my family.

My family's ties are to St. Patrick's Church in Joliet (where I previously served) and our history with you as our spiritual leader has always been a source of strength and belonging. For years, our daughters attended religious education at St. Patrick's, where they received their sacraments and grew in the Catholic faith. We were also blessed to celebrate important moments with the parish including this beautiful Mass for our daughter's 15th Birthday and her blessing at St. Patrick's Church in Momence. We came to Momence for this blessing because my family felt like they were outcasts in Joliet.

Our family also shared in the joy of two nieces celebrating their Quinceañera Masses at St. Patrick's, reminding us how deeply this parish is woven into our family's faith journey. We are also grateful for the guidance you provided my wife regarding our daughter's education.

Today, we are proud to share that Alexandra is a sophomore at St. Mary's College in South Bend. Antonella is a junior at Lewis University and Adriana is a student at Juliet Junior College. These blessings reflect not only their hard work but also the foundation of faith and values cultivated at St. Patrick's as well as the importance of family.

At the same time, I must admit that I have not always been visibly present in the parish community. Out of fear and the risks faced by Hispanic immigrant community, I often have had to make the difficult decision to remain cautious. These decisions have never been easy, but they have always been made with the hope of remaining present long-term for my wife and my three daughters.

Now, as I seek a visa after being the victim of a violent crime, I myself humbly ask for your support. Part of this process involves submitting letters from community leaders who can attest to my family's presence in the church and our efforts to live faithfully despite difficulties. If you feel so inclined, I would be deeply grateful for a letter of support that affirms my role as a husband and father in our desire to remain united as a family.

My greatest fear is the possibility of being separated from my wife and daughters who are all US citizens and the harm such a separation would cause to their well-being. I know that your ministry entails many responsibilities and I do not take this request lightly. Any support that you can provide will mean more than words can express.

Please know that our family is deeply grateful for your prayers, your guidance, and the compassionate leadership you continue to extend to the St. Patrick's community.

With respect and gratitude, Antonio

I cannot say "no" to Antonio. I cannot say "no" to you. I have to do what God asks me to do to support you, to love you, knowing very well that the opposition to what I do is going to be harsh and that people can be cruel. That is the way of the world. There are a lot of people like Naaman the Syrian and the ten lepers that come to me, constantly asking for grace; I know very well that when I offer that grace in God's name, most of them do not come back.

Sometimes you wonder if all the efforts put forth is worth the pain that comes from helping others. On the other hand, when you are making these sacrifices and then reading stories from these families about their children who prosper in the world because of that sacrifice, whether it be children going to college, children who are establishing themselves in our society or children who are doing well in the states, you kind of figure that you are doing your small part in helping another family on this journey of faith.

I very much realize that whatever contributions we make for the sake of others may be small. These sacrifices may be insignificant to some, but to others, it may mean all the difference in the world. So, I try to help others, come what may; I really do. I know this life of ministry is often thankless and is not easy. I know that maybe my gifts are not the best in the world, but I try. I try for you. I sacrifice for you. I love you.

As a priest and Christian, I will love the Antonios in world as much as I can in God's name. Please know that anyone who comes forward and asks for grace should not be deprived of it if they have the proper disposition. I have to have the proper disposition to take care of

everyone and to take care of you and all people that I meet... which includes all of you! This is the best I can do to live out the gospel message. God bless all of you. This is our prayer.