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20 Thursday

Thursday, Week 11 of Ordinary Time

Sirach 48: 1-14

Ps 96: 1-7

Matt. 6: 7-15

Recently, the daily Mass first readings have told us wonderful stories of the work of the great prophet Elijah, from the 1<sup>st</sup> Book of Kings. Today, we read a poetic description of his marvelous deeds and a praise of this great man, whose memory and historic role was very much alive in Jesus' time --- how often is his name mentioned in the gospels? The angel of the Lord announcing the conception of John the Baptist says that John would have the spirit and power of Elijah, to go like him before the Lord; and the angel quotes our reading as about John too: "designated..... to turn the hearts of fathers towards their children". Elijah's great work was to proclaim, and to bring people to recognise, the glory and power of God. Ben Sira's poem about him is part of a long hymn of praise to the glory of God as revealed in nature and in the lives and deeds of a long line of ancestors. It is easier, perhaps, to find God in nature, than to find Him in people, especially people we know. But rather than the critical praise or blame that we usually use about great people, our "ancestors in faith" as well as those of our human families, should we not instead be always trying to see how and where the glory of God is revealed in them, so that we give the praise and glory to God.

Glory and praise to You O Lord, who show Your power and wisdom, Your love and care for us, in all that You have made, and in people all around us: open our eyes, to see.

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