

## Pastoral Reflection: 32nd Sunday of Ordinary Time

Mark 12,38-44

### Generosity

Here, we see Jesus pointing to the poor widow as the model His disciples should emulate. Though the rich gave much, Jesus had no praise for them. But He was all praises for the poor widow. Why? She only had two coins and she could have kept one for herself and still be very generous. But no, she gave both. "She has contributed all she had, her whole livelihood," said Jesus. She let go of everything and committed herself wholly to the providence of God. As one spiritual writer has said, "For Jesus, true generosity is measured not by what people give but by what they have left after they give." But In God's eyes, the big contributor is last, while the widow is first -- she gave 100% of what she had.

Why does God like generosity and reward it? Because to be generous is to be most like God. The whole history of God's intervention in human history is one of generosity -- the creation of the first man and woman with whom God wanted to share His riches, the promise of a savior after the Fall, the gift of His own Son for our redemption and the gift of the Holy Spirit for our sanctification.

We too are all called to be generous. If we look at ourselves, what do we have that we did not receive? Our life, talents, possessions -- they are all gifts from God. In fact, the only thing that is really ours is our sin. If we follow the example of the widow and Jesus Himself who gave His very life for us, we, too, are to be generous to others, to share what we have to others.

But more than just the act of giving, we must watch why we give, that is, our intention in giving. As we know, Jesus had only scathing words against the Scribes and the Pharisees, specially in the way they behave. When they made their contributions, they went to public places so that their gesture would be noticed and praised. How did Jesus call such people? Hypocrites: "When you give something to a needy person, do not make a big show out of it as the hypocrites do" (Mt. 6,2).

We have modern versions of the Scribes and Pharisees. Today, when some people give to charity, they call for a press conference so that the whole world would know of their generosity. Not so with the followers of Jesus. We are to give in secret and for no other reason but to be of help to a brother or sister, in need.

What can we give? Our time, talent and treasure.