



INTRODUCTION

Talk about the experience of offering money or giving contribution to the Church or any group for a particular cause such as building the Church, organizing party for poor children.

What do you think about giving?

How do you feel when you are giving something to others?

What makes you happy in giving? What makes you sad?

In today's Gospel let us see what Jesus says about the act of giving?



OPENING PRAYER

Heavenly Father, we thank you for the gift of your holy Word. We ask you to give us faith to receive your word. Send us your Spirit so that we may read the Bible with understanding. Grant us your knowledge to know what your Word means. May your Word be a lantern to our feet, a light to our paths. Grant us the will to put your Word into practice in our life. Grant this through your Son Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.



PHASE ONE REMEMBER THE STORY OF JESUS

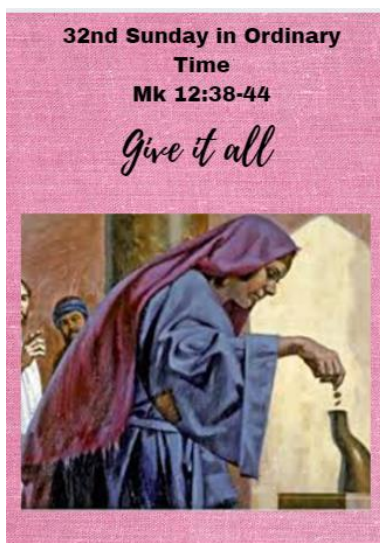
1.1 Proclamation of the Gospel Story Mk 12:38-44 *Enthroned the Bible on a table with lighted candle)*

A moment of prayerful silence

We will not be able to understand the Word of God unless God himself opens our hearts. Let us now welcome Jesus as he speaks to us through his Word
Alleluia, alleluia.

Blessed are the poor in spirit,
 for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
 R. Alleluia, alleluia.

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Mark (12:38-44)



In the course of his teaching Jesus said to the crowds, "Beware of the scribes, who like to go around in long robes and accept greetings in the marketplaces, seats of honor in synagogues, and places of honor at banquets. They devour the houses of widows and, as a pretext

recite lengthy prayers. They will receive a very severe condemnation."

He sat down opposite the treasury and observed how the crowd put money into the treasury.

Many rich people put in large sums.

A poor widow also came and put in two small coins worth a few cents.

Calling his disciples to himself, he said to them, "Amen, I say to you, this poor widow put in more than all the other contributors to the treasury.

For they have all contributed from their surplus wealth,

but she, from her poverty, has contributed all she had, her whole livelihood."

Reader: *The Gospel of the Lord*

All: *Praise to you, O Lord Jesus Christ*

1.2 Brief Guided silent Meditation / Personal Prayer

What did Jesus say about the widow who put her contribution on the temple treasury (offering box)?

1.2 Text in Context

Our Gospel story today happened in the Temple of Jerusalem. The Temple is the center of worship for the Jewish people.

It was expected that observant Jews would make pilgrimages to the Temple to offer prayer and sacrifices. Pilgrims were to drop voluntary contribution to the various chests designated in the temple area. Money collected forms the Temple treasury used for its upkeep and rituals and charitable works,

The main figure in today's reading is the widow whose simplicity and generosity Jesus noticed. Previous to this observation, Jesus denounced the attitude of the Scribes. He condemns their actions like not being true to themselves and others because they focused more on outside appearance.

1. What was Jesus' warning to the crowds about the Scribes? (Beware of the scribes, who like to go around in long robes and accept greetings in the marketplaces, seats of honor in synagogues, and places of honor at banquets.)

2. How did Jesus feel about them? Why? (Jesus was not pleased of their action because they are not honest to themselves and to God)

3. What did Jesus notice about the people putting money into the collection box? (The rich people put in large amounts of money; a poor widow put in two small coins.)

4. What did Jesus say about the poor widow? (The poor widow gave more than all the others because she shared all that she had.?)



The Poor widow gives all that she has.

As Jesus traveled with the disciples from one place to another, he would always meet the crowds of people. Wherever he was, in the city or town, by the road or inside house, in the synagogue or temple, he grabbed every opportunity to teach the values of the kingdom.

This time while teaching in the temple area, he observed a poor widow, praising her with these words: *Amen, I say to you, this poor widow put in more than all the other contributors to the treasury. For they have all contributed from their surplus wealth, but she, from her poverty, has contributed all she had, her whole livelihood."*

There are many poor in Israel. Those considered poor are the widows, orphans, and foreigners of the land.

Nothing is said who this unnamed widow is, except for the two small coins that she puts in the treasury (like an offertory trumpet-shaped container). Her action speaks louder who she is; a person whose hope is only in God. Faith tells her that God is greater than her need to survive. She gives all that she has- her last two coins (perhaps about 100 pesos worth).

She will not know where to get her next meal. She is ready to starve and face death, like the poor widow in Zeraphat (see today's First Reading 1 Kings 17:10-16). We may say that she must be foolish to offer her last money to the donation box. She could be excused from giving. But here lies the mystery of generous self-giving. She gives her life as an offering to God. Her honest intention and generosity are hidden but known to Jesus who looks at the heart.

The Significance of the Poor

The simplicity of the poor widow is in contrast to the attitude of the Scribes that Jesus strongly talks against in many instances.

Scribes like making themselves popular and want others to think big of themselves. They make a great display of their devotion to God. Should God be pleased with their donations?

Jesus appreciates more the widow who gave offering out her poverty rather than those who gave out of their abundance. God prefers quality, not quantity.

When the widow makes her offering, Jesus does not praise her for the two coins offered. Her act of giving is not a financial activity, but the entrusting of her very self on the grace of God.

We can see the in the person of the widow the many poor in our world today. Sad to say that the poor are mostly considered insignificant and tend to be abused.

In the many stories in the Gospel, Jesus shows special attention to the poor. People with physical defects like the blind, mute and deaf, lame would come to Jesus for healing. Most of them have nothing to spend for treatment or to see a doctor. They rely only in mercy of God for healing. It is through the faith of the poor,

who have nothing that the mighty acts of God are shown. Miracles happened because of those who have nothing, They have to depend on God. This is the dignity of the poor,

When was the last time I gave something to someone or to the Church? What does the widow in the story teach me about giving? How can I be like her in my attitude?

Christ being poor enriches us

Jesus Christ is the Son of God with the Father in power and glory. He chose to be poor. He was born in a poor stable and grew up in a simple family. He worked as a carpenter. He ministered and lived among the poor people. This is how God works. He makes himself known not in worldly power and riches. Christ set aside his glory and his being God in order to be one among us in all things except sin.

Christ's poverty is the greatest treasure of all: Jesus' wealth is that of his boundless confidence in God the Father, his constant trust, his desire always and only to do the Father's will and give glory to him. Jesus is rich in the same way as a child who feels loved and who loves its parents, without doubting their love and tenderness for an instant.

(Pope Francis)

In the same manner, the poor has less comfort and are deprived of material wealth, but they have the greatest treasure of knowing the certainty of God's love. No wonder the poor widow readily gives what she cannot afford to give. She teaches us to be generous in our self-giving to God.

PHASE THREE RESPOND – with/ in my personal faith /community faith story

As followers of Christ, we are called to help our brothers and sisters who are destitute. Pope Francis said "Destitution" is not the same as "poverty": destitution is poverty without faith, without support, without hope. Normally, those who lack the basics in life (food, shelter, education) refers to material destitution that is against our dignity as children of God. God wants us to live happy. We may find them in our neighborhood? What is our attitude towards them?

Can we say: how can I be generous, if I could hardly get through my own needs?

Let us just consider the small things that we can do. Let us check our clothes or shoes or other things? How many do I have? Do I really need all of them? What shall I do?



CLOSING PRAYER

St. Ignatius Prayer

Lord Jesus, teach me to be generous.
Teach me to serve as you deserve,
To give and not to count the cost,
To fight and not to heed the wounds,
To labor and not to seek to rest,
To give of myself and not ask for a reward,
Except the reward of knowing that I am doing your will.
Amen

