

Jesus sat down opposite the treasury and observed how the crowd put money into the treasury. He said to his disciples, "Amen I say to you, this poor widow put in more than all the others." Words from our gospel today from the 12<sup>th</sup> chapter of the gospel according to St. Mark – sisters and brothers, may the Lord give to you his peace & his joy.

Not too long ago, I was distributing Holy Communion at a Sunday Mass here at Queen of Heaven, and one of our younger parishioners, Matthew - who maybe just turned four years old - switched lines at the front of Church to come over to me to receive a blessing. Or so I thought. But instead of bowing his head, he proudly held up a penny in his hand for me to have. And then he quickly scooted away to rejoin his family. In any event, I still have the penny; here it is, and although a penny of course doesn't amount to much, it is one of the more memorable gifts that I have ever been given, perhaps because it was a gift that was given for no other reason than he wanted me to have it. I was surprised by the gesture, mostly because Matthew is pretty shy, and when I would often greet his family after Mass in the Narthex, he would quickly hide behind Mom's legs. But I remember being awestruck by his unbridled generosity and how he went out of his way simply to give me this little coin. As a child, he has few possessions that are truly his own, but in sharing that penny with me, I thought he exemplified the generosity of the poor widows from our readings today.

I also want to take a moment during this Veteran's Day weekend to give thanks to all the veterans, living and deceased, for their great generosity and the sacrifices they have made in service to our great country. The thoughts and prayers of every American go out to you not just this Veteran's day, but every day of the year. Without a doubt, our veterans have answered the call to promote and defend our values and, for the sake of their fellow citizens, were likewise ready to give over their own livelihood, wellbeing, and lives much like the widows of our readings today.

Indeed, the widows from our readings gave over everything. The widow met by the prophet Elijah in our first reading was really struggling to provide for her and her son. After a severe famine struck the land, she had only enough flour and oil for one last meal, but after that her pantry was bare. She had absolutely nothing to spare, and together with her son, was at the point of death from starvation. But what little she did have she gave away, entrusting her fate to God. And then there is the poor widow from our Gospel today who and donated two small coins. While they had little monetary value, by the fact that they amounted to her life's savings, and therefore her whole livelihood, Jesus recognized that she had indeed put in more than all the others. These widows didn't give from their surplus, or what they could perhaps afford, but they gave it all; they gave away everything. While others may ignore us or even exploit our struggles for their

own gain, as the scribes referenced in our Gospel were known to do, God knows the hearts and minds of all. God does see the good that we do, and truly appreciates the value of the widows' contribution. By God's providence, the jar of flour does not go empty and the jug of oil does not run dry. God will not be outdone in generosity. God can take even what little we have, and turn it into our very salvation.

For us, this happens every time we come to celebrate the Eucharist. In the prayers during the offertory of the Mass, the priest says: 'pray brothers and sisters, that my sacrifice and yours may be acceptable to God, the almighty Father.' With all these examples of generosity today, this should give us pause to ask ourselves, 'What exactly is it that I am bringing to be offered to God in the sacrifice of the Mass?' When the gifts of bread and wine are brought to the altar, we also should want to be brought with them, saying to Christ, 'I want to be offered with you in your great act of redemption.' In the offertory, we bring the offering of our prayers for others, our sacrifices, our labors and sufferings of body and soul, our works of mercy. We bring our vocations as a husband or wife, father or mother, our families, our joys and disappointments, our loneliness and trials. It is more than just the collection. Symbolically, we are bringing everything to the altar and placing it with the gift of our self on the paten and in the chalice, under the form of bread and wine. When the gifts, the crucifix, and altar are incensed during the offertory, and the celebrant and the entire congregation are incensed by the deacon or another minister, it gives further image to how we are all together united in the one sacrifice that will be offered in the consecration. During the consecration, we sanctify our offering by dying in Christ upon Calvary. With the immortal words of Christ — 'This is my Body... This is the Chalice of my Blood' — we die in Christ by repeating His words back to Him saying, 'this, too, is my body... this, too, is my blood!' It is this longing from our hearts that cries out, 'I am all Thine, My Lord and I give myself over to you!' which best prepares us for Holy Communion along with the graces that we receive from it.<sup>1</sup>

God wants to give us everything, but God can only work with what we give over to Him. Like Matthew, like our veterans, like the holy widows, let's hold nothing of ourselves back but give over our entire being to God when we celebrate the Eucharist together, knowing that God cannot be outdone in generosity.

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<sup>1</sup> Adapted from a homily of Bishop Richard F. Stika, <https://etcatholic.org/2018/06/he-dwells-among-us-my-sacrifice-and-yours/>

Readings: <http://usccb.org/bible/readings/111118.cfm>

**Thirty-second Sunday in Ordinary Time**

**Lectionary: 155**

**Reading 1 [1 KGS 17:10-16](#)**

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In those days, Elijah the prophet went to Zarephath.  
As he arrived at the entrance of the city,  
a widow was gathering sticks there; he called out to her,  
"Please bring me a small cupful of water to drink."  
She left to get it, and he called out after her,  
"Please bring along a bit of bread."  
She answered, "As the LORD, your God, lives,  
I have nothing baked; there is only a handful of flour in my jar  
and a little oil in my jug.  
Just now I was collecting a couple of sticks,  
to go in and prepare something for myself and my son;  
when we have eaten it, we shall die."  
Elijah said to her, "Do not be afraid.  
Go and do as you propose.  
But first make me a little cake and bring it to me.  
Then you can prepare something for yourself and your son.  
For the LORD, the God of Israel, says,  
"The jar of flour shall not go empty,  
nor the jug of oil run dry,  
until the day when the LORD sends rain upon the earth."  
She left and did as Elijah had said.  
She was able to eat for a year, and he and her son as well;  
the jar of flour did not go empty,  
nor the jug of oil run dry,  
as the LORD had foretold through Elijah.

**Responsorial Psalm [PS 146:7, 8-9, 9-10](#)**

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R. (1b) **Praise the Lord, my soul!**

or:

R. **Alleluia.**

The LORD keeps faith forever,  
secures justice for the oppressed,  
gives food to the hungry.  
The LORD sets captives free.

R. **Praise the Lord, my soul!**

or:

R. **Alleluia.**

The LORD gives sight to the blind;  
the LORD raises up those who were bowed down.  
The LORD loves the just;  
the LORD protects strangers.

R. **Praise the Lord, my soul!**

or:

R. **Alleluia.**

The fatherless and the widow he sustains,  
but the way of the wicked he thwarts.

The LORD shall reign forever;  
your God, O Zion, through all generations. Alleluia.  
**R. Praise the Lord, my soul!**

or:

**R. Alleluia.**

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**Reading 2** [HEB 9:24-28](#)

Christ did not enter into a sanctuary made by hands,  
a copy of the true one, but heaven itself,  
that he might now appear before God on our behalf.  
Not that he might offer himself repeatedly,  
as the high priest enters each year into the sanctuary  
with blood that is not his own;  
if that were so, he would have had to suffer repeatedly  
from the foundation of the world.  
But now once for all he has appeared at the end of the ages  
to take away sin by his sacrifice.  
Just as it is appointed that human beings die once,  
and after this the judgment, so also Christ,  
offered once to take away the sins of many,  
will appear a second time, not to take away sin  
but to bring salvation to those who eagerly await him.

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**Alleluia** [MT 5:3](#)

**R. Alleluia, alleluia.**

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

**R. Alleluia, alleluia.**

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**Gospel** [MK 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."