

November 07, 2021
32nd Sunday in Ordinary Time
1 Kgs 17:10-16
Heb 9:24-28
Mk 12:38-44 or 12:41-44

WHAT SHALL I OFFER THE LORD?

**What shall I offer the Lord?
For all he has done for me.
The cup of salvation, I will raise.
And call upon the name of the Lord.**

I have been hearing and singing this song growing up. I love it because it challenges me to dig deeper on the quality of my offerings to the Lord Jesus. I love it because it invites me to reflect on how I use the gifts of time, talent, and treasure God gives me. I love it because it calls me to continue asking myself: **Do I give back my time, talent, and treasure in a spirit of generosity and sacrifice for the sake of the mission entrusted to me?**

In today's gospel proclaimed the Lord Jesus sat down opposite of the treasury and observed how people gave/offered their gifts. The Lord Jesus noticed the difference between the rich people and the poor widow in their giving/offering. The former gave/offered from their surplus wealth while the latter gave/offered her all.

The offering of the poor widow was used by the Lord Jesus to teach his disciples, by extension – us, what true giving/offering is about. It was clear in the Lord Jesus' teaching that what pleased him was not the greater sum of the offering but the spirit put in the giving. In this instance, the poor widow gave her offering, though small, in a spirit of generosity and sacrifice. It was given out of love and trust in God. She offered 'her all' to God.

In our 1st reading proclaimed there was a poor widow in Zarephath who demonstrated her deep trust in God when she shared her food generously to Elijah. She believed Elijah's proclamation that God will take care of her and her son. She believed Elijah's message that a giving done in a spirit of generosity and sacrifice will be reciprocated by God. It happened - her jar of flour and the jug of oil did not go empty until the famine ended.

The poor widows in the gospel and in the 1st reading gave/offered what they had in a spirit of generosity and sacrifice. It was done in love and trust in God. The giving/offering they did prefigure/foreshadow the giving/offering of the Lord Jesus of himself for us. We do know that in giving himself on the Cross he did it in a spirit of generosity, love, trust, and sacrifice. And this giving/offering continues here in the celebration of the Holy Eucharist. The Lord Jesus over and over again offers himself to us in the Sacrifice of the Mass so we can have life in abundance. He gives himself out of generosity and love for us.

We all know that the Lord Jesus loves us. Look at the Cross – it's a testimony of what sacrificial offering/giving means. The bigger question is – **how are we reciprocating His love offering to us? Is our offering/giving reflective of how grateful we are for the gifts He gave us? Do we offer/give in a spirit of generosity and love? Will the Lord Jesus commend us in our giving/offering like what he did with the poor widow?**

There is a story told of a wealthy man who had never been, what anyone would call, a generous giver. His Church was having a big expansion program and financial campaign, so they resolved to visit him. In order to succeed where they had so often failed, they appointed a committee to study the situation. Finally, the committee called on the prospect and told him that in view of his resources they were sure that he would want to make a rather substantial contribution. **"I see,"** the wealthy man said, **"that you have considered it all quite carefully. In the course of your investigation, did you discover that I have an aged, widowed mother who has no other means of support?"** "No, we didn't know that." The committee responded. **"Did you know that I have a sister who was left by a drunken husband with five small children and no means of providing for them?"** They replied, **"No, we didn't know."** **"Did you know that I have a brother who was crippled in an accident and will never be able to do another day's work in his life to support himself and his family?"** They answered, **"No, we didn't know that too."** **"Well,"** he thundered triumphantly, **"I have never done anything for them, so why should I do anything for you?"**

It is good that we are not like the wealthy man in the story, **right?** We do give to the Church. Nonetheless, let us keep on asking ourselves as regards the quality of our giving/offering. **Do we give/offer lovingly? Do we give/offer generously? Is our giving/offering an act of sacrifice?**

I am happy to see the growth of our faith community. Even in the midst of the pandemic I have seen new people stepping up and getting involved in the life of the parish. I presumed they had recognized that to be **Stewards of the Gospel** is more than just sitting on the pews and dropping their dollars in the collection baskets. I would like to believe the growth of our faith community, in terms of having more servants now rather than masters, is because they realized that the best way to reciprocate God's goodness is through generous, loving, and humble service.

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