

BRINGING HOME THE GOSPEL

November 10, 2024 • 32nd Sunday in Ordinary Time • Mark 12:38-44

Living Life With a Generous Heart

Jesus mentions widows twice in this reading. The first time is when he strongly criticizes the scribes for walking around in fine robes while they “devour widows’ houses” (v. 40) The second reference is when he points out a generous widow who puts her whole livelihood into the collection.

The widow in this Gospel was certainly a woman of faith and an example to all of us. However, I don’t think Jesus is telling us that we are all expected to give away everything we have and just trust in him. This is what he told the rich man, of course, and what he seems to be praising in this story of the widow.

But the call to poverty is a specific call and not one that all of us are meant to live. What I do think Jesus expects of us is to live our lives with a generous heart and with the same faith the widow had as she gave her last two coins away. There is a clear message here that we are not to live like the scribes, enjoying the high life, driving expensive cars, wearing fine clothes at the expense of other people. Jesus is also quite clear about sharing what we have with those who are in need. We are not to give just from the extra money we have, the surplus, but also from our bounty. It may not be necessary to give everything away, but we should give away enough to at least feel the pinch.

Jesus also calls us to live our lives poor in spirit, not getting too comfortable with what we have or what we earn. Financial security is no longer a given reality even for folks who work hard, have a dozen degrees and have served a company loyally for

years. The widow gave up her livelihood willingly, but in today’s economic world some of us are forced into that situation involuntarily. Like the widow, we need to know that no matter what happens we will be OK. We need her faith in a God who always provides.

FAMILY RESPONSE

Ask everyone to go through their toys or clothes and choose at least two things they can give to people in need. When they have finished, gather again and talk about what you are giving away. Make sure you are giving from your bounty and not just your surplus.

PERSONAL RESPONSE

Have you ever had to live without some of the daily essentials of life? How did you cope? How do you think you would cope? What do you want to remember from last week? What are you looking forward to next week? What are your concerns?