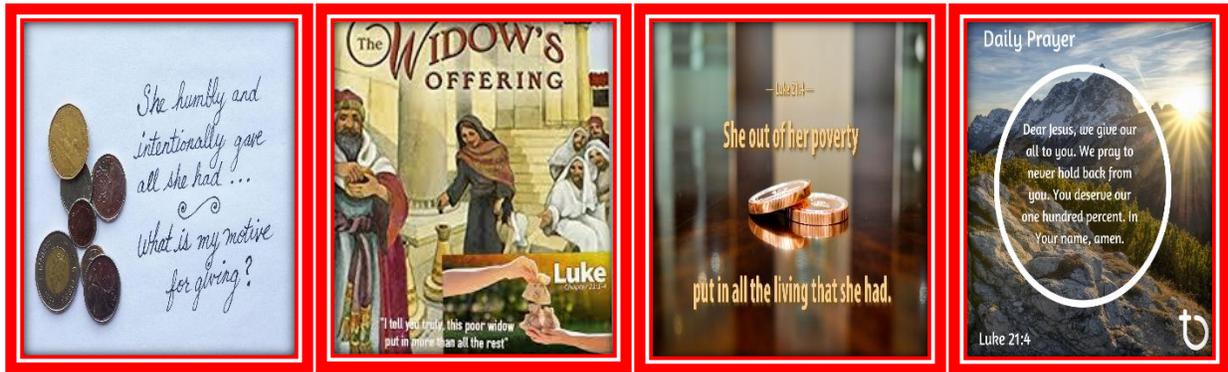


November 23, 2020 – Monday of the last week in Ordinary Time



**“Generously using the ‘shovel of giving’ and thus giving space for the Lord to ‘use His Bigger Shovel’ in our lives!”
(Rev 14:1-5 and Lk 21:1-4)**

An elderly Christian – retired from work – who was well-known for his selfless charitable acts, was once asked by a youngster: “We all are aware that you are a very generous person reaching out to help anyone in need. But we have always wondered, how is it, that though you give so much, to so many people you still have so much left!” “Oh!” replied the elderly man, “as I shovel out, He shovels in!” (Shovel is a tool resembling a spade with a broad blade and typically upturned sides, used for moving mud, coal, snow, or other material) “And the Lord has a Bigger Shovel than me!” Do I generously use the “shovel of giving” thus giving space for the Lord to ‘use His Bigger Shovel’ in my life...? Do we have the joy and the generosity to give ourselves, to the Lord, and for His works?

The Gospel of the Day demonstrates the powerful message of True Giving, through the incident of the Offering of the Poor Widow. The passage begins with the verse, “When Jesus looked up and saw...” (Lk 21: 1).

Jesus has sharp eyes. He sees what most people miss to see. He perceives what most people ignore. He observes what most people pass on as ordinary.

- While all others saw only the corrupt mind of Zacchaeus, Jesus saw deeper... (Lk 19:7). He observed the flame of genuine repentance and earnest desire in him.
- While all others saw only the filth in the woman caught in adultery, Jesus saw deeper...(Jn 8:3). He observed the spark of pleading for mercy and compassion in her.
- While all others saw only a disturbance in the blind beggar Bartimaeus, Jesus saw deeper... (Lk 18:39). He observed the flash of true longing and expectant hope in him.

There are many times in our life when we think or do little things and we would feel them as insignificant. But the Lord sees deeper.

A tiny word of thanks and appreciation. The Lord sees our goodness.

- A small gesture of timely help and assistance. The Lord sees our nobility.
- A genuine smile of encouragement and support. The Lord sees our benevolence.
- The palace of goodness is built by the tiny bricks of genuine actions and loving thoughts. And the Lord sees it all – “The eyes of the Lord are in every place, watching the evil and the good” (Prov. 15:3). He doesn’t miss a single gift, small or large. He knows every giver, rich and poor.

This is the significance of being engaged in little and small acts of charity. None of them go down the drain. Rather, all of them are recorded by God and translates into a fountain of blessings! The Lord keenly observed the insignificant action of the Poor Widow dropping in two copper coins into the Temple Treasury. The Temple Treasury was in the Court of the Women, which was on the easternmost part of the Temple. Against the walls of this temple area were the thirteen chests, or ‘trumpets,’ for charitable contributions. These thirteen chests were shaped like trumpets, narrow at the mouth and wide at the bottom. Each one had a different Hebrew letter designating separate offerings and causes. Into this Temple Treasury... the poor widow just drops in two small copper coins? (Lk 21:2)

What difference did her two coins make toward meeting the temple budget?

Probably nothing. Perhaps the treasurer muttered under his breath as he saw it being dropped: “Why do people throw such small coins into the treasury? They’re more a nuisance to count than they’re worth.” But the Lord has a different yardstick of measuring and of judging. People count the worth of money by what is given. God counts the worth of money by what is left over. People say “wow” over thicker and fatter amounts given, irrespective of the means and intention. God says “Wow” over any amount given, but only when given with the proper means and true intention. While most people would have sidelined this meager act of giving, the Lord lavishes praise on the poor widow who “gave it all”. The gifts of the rich would have not cost them much. But the widow may have gone hungry that night because she gave all that she had. She gave it all, not for any praise or to show-off, but out of love of God and her religion.

What is our attitude in “giving” to God? Often we give only “leftovers” to God.

- If we have some food left, after we have relished nicely, we give it off to some hungry.
- If we have anything left, after we’ve spent on all our needs, then we drop a bit for charity.
- If we have something left after we have used it, and it's now old, we donate it to the church.
- If we have some “time” left, after engaging in all leisure, then we give the time to God. If we have some goodwill left, after busying with many works, we offer our thanks to the Lord.

The Lord, seriously, is in no need of the offering of our money. But the Lord, very seriously, is on the lookout for an offering of our hearts. Let us make not just peripheral contribution of our lives, but rather engage in sacrificial offerings of our self.

As Blessed Mother Teresa would say: "Give, but give until it hurts. It's not how much we give but how much love we put into giving". The Lord has given everything for us. As His disciples, we too are expected to be similar: to give everything to Him. An "all-giving" Master deserves "all-giving" disciples. Doesn't He?

Let us generously use the "shovel of giving" thus giving space for the Lord to 'use His Bigger Shovel' in my life. May the words of St John Berchmans, a young saint of just 22 years, the Patron Saint of Altar Servers, inspire us: "Our true worth does not consist in that human beings think of us. What we really are consists in what God knows us to be."

Let us pray:

Lord Jesus, help us to be generous and share the many gifts You have bestowed on us. Help us to help those who cannot help themselves, teach us how to give and not count the cost. I ask for Your help to see the best in the small and impoverished everyday gestures that I might notice. I bring these moments before You for the blessing.

Jesus, I Trust in You