

Readings

1 Kgs 17:10-16

Ps 146:7, 8-9, 9-10

Heb 9:24-28

Mk 12:38-44 *or* 12:41-44

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In today's Gospel, Jesus notices a widow at the temple. She's almost invisible among the crowd; no one else would think twice about her. But He sees her for who she truly is – a woman of deep faith and radical generosity. Though she is poor, she places two small coins into the treasury. These coins don't amount to much in value, yet Jesus tells us they mean everything, because in giving them, she gives her entire livelihood. It's a remarkable act of faith: trusting that God will care for her even as she gives her last bit of money.

Her story resonates with another widow, this one from the Old Testament, who encountered the prophet Elijah during a time of desperate famine. She, too, was on the edge of survival, down to her last portion of flour and oil, preparing a final meal for herself and her son. Yet when Elijah asks her to share what little she has, she responds in trust, taking a leap of faith. This widow discovers that God's provision stretches beyond her own limits: the flour and oil never run out. She becomes a sign of God's faithfulness, demonstrating that when we are willing to share even from our need, we make room for God's abundant grace.

These stories are so compelling because they speak to something many of us hesitate to embrace. There's a cost to generosity when we give not from our excess, but from our need.

Most of us are accustomed to sharing what we can afford to part with – time, energy, or resources that don't affect us too deeply. But these widows show us a different kind of giving: one that doesn't calculate or hold back, but instead reveals a profound trust in God's care.

Christ's own life mirrors this kind of sacrificial love. He didn't just offer a part of Himself for us; He gave all He had. His sacrifice was total, not because it was easy, but because it was a reflection of His boundless love for us. Each time we gather to celebrate the Eucharist, we're reminded of this gift, of a love that poured itself out completely. In the Mass, we are brought back to the heart of Christ's self-giving, His complete surrender for our sake.

This example of sacrificial love challenges our own approach to giving. The truth is, it's far easier to give when it doesn't cost us much. We often think of generosity as something we do on our terms, giving from our extra, our leftovers. But these widows call us to rethink what it means to live generously. Their giving is not based on abundance but on a belief that God will meet their needs, even when they have so little to give.

In our own lives, it's natural to seek security through what we possess. We often hold back, measuring what we can afford to part with rather than risking a greater trust in God. But Jesus points out that the widow's two small coins, given with faith, mean more to Him than large offerings given without much thought. Her heart, open and trusting, makes her gift greater than any large donation from those who give just to keep up appearances.

As we reflect on her example, we might ask ourselves: Do we give like the widow, with an open and trusting heart? Or are we more like those who give out of a sense of duty or for the sake of appearance, holding back just enough to maintain our comfort?

These widows remind us that God values not the amount we give but the depth of our trust. When we give from the heart, we make space for God to act in ways we might never anticipate. Generosity isn't just a virtue; it's a way of living that draws us closer to God and helps us to see the world more as He does.

This kind of giving doesn't have to be grand. It can look like offering time to listen to someone who needs support, extending patience to someone who tries our nerves, or sharing a word of encouragement when someone is struggling. These gestures, though small, are powerful when they come from the heart. In a sense, each of these acts of kindness and generosity is like a small coin we place in the treasury, an offering made in trust and love.

As we go through the week, we might reflect on where God is calling us to share a little more freely. Perhaps we're being asked to give not just what is easy but what might require more faith on our part. Whether it's a kindness to a friend, time in prayer, or even a small act of service, God invites us to stretch our hearts, to give without calculating what we'll get in return.

Ultimately, the widows in today's readings are not remembered for what they possessed but for the trust they showed in the face of their own need. Their examples remind us that every small act of generosity, done with love, reaches far beyond what we can see. And as we strive to live with a heart open to others, we are drawn closer to God, who sees and values even the smallest of our sacrifices.

In this way, God honors every act of sacrificial love and every quiet gift. As we learn to give like these widows, we learn to trust more fully in a God who never ceases to care for us. May we, like them, learn to give ourselves wholeheartedly to Him, trusting that His love will always sustain us.