

32nd Sunday OT 2024

Mark 1:38-43 - *The Widow in the Temple*

Jesus' first action in Jerusalem according to Mark, was to **cleanse the Temple** and to justify his action, he quoted words spoken by the *prophets* long before.

His final action in the Temple was **to warn the people about the Scribes** and the example they gave. Again, Jesus turned to the *prophets*, like the authorities of the people in former ages, they were consuming the property of the widows. Severe though his indictment is, it is mild compared with the sevenfold condemnation of the Scribes and the Pharisees that we read in Matthew.

The word **widow** serves as a catchword to introduce the only direct teaching that Jesus addressed to his disciples so far in Jerusalem. He sees a widow putting all she had to live on in the temple collection box. Her commitment to God and trust in him, **was total**. Unlike James and John asking for seats with Jesus in his glory, or the Scribes looking for places of honor at banquets, she wanted nothing for herself. She joins the ranks of Bartimaeus and the good Scribe in putting before the reader attitudes well worth imitation by those longing for the realization of God's Kingdom.

From *Catholic Women Preach*, Phyllis Zagano writes, "Whose Church is it? Recall that in today's reading...Jesus warns us about those scribes who *always take seats of honor in synagogues and places of honor at banquets*. She reminds us that, "**Somebody** let those scribes sit up front. **Somebody** decided that what those scribes represented—the law—was most important in the community. **Somebody** ignored all sorts of biblical teaching to place the law and enforcers of the law above everybody else. **Somebody** said law was most important in the scheme of things."

However, "Jesus seems to say that the poor widow is the person we should admire...(She) had no one to depend upon but God." Phyllis also points out that "she is not trying to buy any *celestial insurance*...but to share what little she has with the rest of her community. She is putting her share into the treasury because...she is part of **the People of God**."

We **are** the *People of God*. We are the **ecclesia**, the **assembly**. We do not need to put our last dollar into the collection basket. But, she adds, "I do think

it means that you need to understand and believe that no matter how you participate in church, you are a full member of the ***People of God.***"

As full members of the People of God we contribute by any means we have, even our ***time.*** Phyllis also writes that, the "Hierarchy cannot cut itself off from the rest of the People of God...Christ did not enter a sanctuary made by hands, restricted and accessible only to special people. No, Christ came into our "Sanctuary," the world, and his suffering and resurrection were for all."

It seems at times that ***the little people*** in the church get forgotten. But today's gospel reminds us that they aren't forgotten by Christ and are even held up as an example for us. "For she offered all that she possessed to God." And like the woman who anointed him at the last supper, "she anointed his head, preparing his body for burial. She had given all she had."

What are we willing to give up for God? For most of us, our ***TIME*** is the most valuable and personal thing. That is why contemplative prayer is so difficult, because we feel we are wasting time just sitting there trying not to think. But at some time in our life, we will have to sit with a loved one in the silence, because they are dying and can't speak or even think. Hopefully, we will realize that sitting with a loved one unable to communicate with us but is still present in spirit, is almost the same as sitting with God, who is really present, and very much alive. The difference may be in our love.

The best of both worlds would be that at some point we can sit with God and our loved one/s, in the quiet, without saying a word, and just enjoying their presence. Why wait until the end.