

Homily. 32nd Sunday in Ordinary Time. Year. B. 6/7 November 2021.

Some years ago, at the funeral of Fr. Pat Moloney's mother, I was intrigued that the gospel chosen for the Mass was the one that we've just heard. I wondered how the story of the widow's small gift connected with what I knew of Wanda Moloney's life? Well, as it turned out I didn't know near enough about her story. Wanda had been widowed early in her married life, left to bring up her young family. She succeeded in doing so strengthened by her devotion to God and supported by her local Church community. She gave everything to God and for her children, trusting daily in God's providential care, and she was not let down.

What made Jesus stop, notice and point out to his disciples the example of the small gift offered by widow at the Jerusalem Temple treasury was that she gave her all. This differed much from what the rich and powerful were doing. They gave more, but they had so much more to offer and with plenty more to spare. They gave in order to get noticed, liked and pats on the back. The poor widow gave for better and from much purer motives. She gave everything she had to live on out of her sincere love for God and for her faith. She gave because she had a grateful heart, a heart free from fear, trusting in God's care and kindness. This was the key to her generosity and it can be the key to the way we live our lives too.

You see, hidden beneath their lavish robes and behind their bundles of money, the rich and powerful were very scared. Their hoarding and their obsessive need for attention masked their fear and insecurity, their lack of trust in others and in God. How they looked, what they owned and getting

noticed by others was, as it often still is, a shield for their deeply scared souls, troubled minds and restless hearts. Not so was it for the widow, nor as it turned out was it so for Wanda, and as I e said, nor does it have to be this way for us either.

As we heard in the 1st reading, the widow in the drought ravaged land was scared that if she fed the Prophet of God their wouldn't be enough for her and her son's last meal. Elijah told her not to be afraid of such an outcome. She listened to him and chose to put her trust in God's word. The flour did not run out nor the jug of oil run dry. It turned out that her freedom from fear was in having faith in Gods generosity and care, living each day with gratitude just like the Jews had done during their 40 years in their desert. It can turn out this way for us, too. If we lay down our obsession with control and security, trusting instead God's goodness and grace, then we can lay aside out unwarranted fears and anxieties as well. Even if things don't happen exactly as we wanted and planned, God will be with working with us, sustaining us until the new, better day dawns.

In the Lord's Prayer we ask God to give us our daily bread. This implies that we do really trust God to be true to Gods word. It also implies that we give ourselves over daily into a cooperative partnership with the Lord. When this happens, when this prayer is practiced, then our fears and arrogance plummet and our gratefulnesses and faith prospers. We become more who we really and truly are; Gods chosen sons and daughters, faithfully and joyfully awaiting for the Lords return in the full knowledge that his coming brings our salvation, in and by God's abundant loving gift.