

# Connecting with the Sunday Readings

**Thirty-second Sunday in Ordinary Time**    **Gospel Word**  
Mark 12:38-44

Sometimes a Gospel passage unmask all that is pretentious and false. This week we have such a text. In this passage (Mark 12:38-40), Jesus warns those he is teaching to watch out for the scribes who abused their position to gain status, privilege, and wealth. He specifically mentions their preying on the widows who were one of the poorest and most vulnerable groups of those times.

The scene of this passage is the treasury, a place where people came to pay what they owed or what was expected of them. Whether this was at the Temple or at the government's place of business is not clear. It is clear, however that it was a place to show off. The wealthy would enter with great fanfare, hoping to attract notice. The religious leaders would do the same. It seemed that they wanted public recognition. They wanted to impress. They wanted a reputation for being charitable.

Along comes the poor widow who drops two coins into the collection container. Measured by the amount of the gift, it seems small, perhaps even insignificant. But Jesus goes on to note that it is more than all the other contributions because it was all that she had. She gave everything. Her generosity was complete.

—by David Thomas, PhD, Co-Director, The Bethany Family Institute

## Living the Word

There is more to generosity than the amounts of money given before the eyes of others. Many of our finest public projects, our great universities, our needed hospitals, medical and scientific research, the dealing with the major problems of the world relating to hunger and disease, depend on the magnanimity of the wealthy. But what about the rest of us? We get by financially month-by-month, even at times, day by day. How is generosity ascribed to us, the ordinary ones? How is generosity best judged?

The answer is found in this story of the "widow's mite." Her donation was not made from her leftovers! It came from her want and was marked by a spirit of dependence and abundance. Christians who live from a spirit of abundance rather than a spirit of scarcity have a fundamental belief that all that they have is not really theirs. It is God's. There is enough; there will always be enough, and in fact because it is God's, there is more than enough.

Jesus uses this wondrously concrete example to describe the kind of involvement he hopes for from us. We are to give our time and energy, all that we are and possess, to a life of generous love. He can make such a demand because it is exactly what he has done. We are invited not to look at what we give, but to look into our hearts to determine whether our gifts are adequate or not.

## One-line Prayer

God of abundance, give us the wisdom to see, and the courage to give fully of ourselves in your service.  
Amen.