

32 OTB.18; 1Kgs 17:10-16; Heb 9:24-28; Mark 12:38-44; **“Of pennies and dreams...”**
First a little wisdom

*“Remember when you leave this earth, you take with you nothing that you have received, only what you have given: **a full heart**, enriched by honest service,*

love, sacrifice, and courage.” - attributed to St. Francis of Assisi **And,**

“Unless someone like you cares a whole awful lot, nothing is going to get better.”
-Dr. Seuss

Now a story from Ireland about a few pennies

“A priest, who was chaplain to young offenders in a Dublin prison, tells the following story. One day a prisoner by the name of Tommy came up to him. Tommy was about 22. It was his first time in prison. He was serving a six-month sentence. ‘What’s up, Tommy?’ the priest asked.

‘Father, would you do me a favor?’ Tommy said. ‘Of course,’ the priest answered.

He was expecting the usual kind of request: Would you phone home, or would you phone my girlfriend - something of that kind.

Instead Tommy said, ‘Father, would you take all my money out of my account, and send it to the fund for Aoife (Alfie) at St. Luke’s hospital.’

Aoife was a little girl who had cancer. Tommy had read about her case in a newspaper, and how they were trying to raise money so that she could have an operation. The prisoners get a small weekly allowance (at that time it was a meagre \$7) that they can spend in the prison shop, or save for when they are released. Tommy had about \$160 in his account.

‘Why are you doing this?’ the priest asked.

‘I’m doing it because I have a little daughter, aged three. If anything happened to her I’d die.’ ‘Are you sure you want me to take it **all** out?’ the priest asked.

‘I am, Father,’ Tommy replied.

The priest sent off the money. A thoughtful letter of thanks came back. Six months later the priest was driving home when he saw Tommy and his little daughter walking hand in hand. He slowed down and beeped the horn. Tommy came over and said to him, *‘I’m out, Father, and I’m not going back.’*

(Source: *New Sunday & Holy Day Liturgies, Revised & Expanded*, 32 OTB, F. McCarty)

Wisdom can be found everywhere and in everyone.

And, Love is the summit of Wisdom.

In today’s Gospel, Jesus warns the crowd to beware of the religious leaders who liked to be held in great esteem, *at the expense of the widows*. They demonstrated piety and accepted honors not accorded to others.

But they did not really do anything for the community.

They did not care for those who were entrusted to them.

Contrast this with the widow whom Jesus points out: *A poor widow also came and put in two small coins worth a few cents. Calling his disciples to himself, he said 2 to them, "Amen, I say to you, this poor widow put in more than all the others..."* She contributed to the Temple treasury *from her want*; she gave her whole livelihood in order to ensure that others within her community might have *something*. And while Jesus does not ask this question, we might: *which of these two examples tells us something essential about who God is? Clearly the widow.*

God is like that widow in his care for us: he holds absolutely nothing back. God gives us everything God has, and is, *in Jesus*. As the widow sacrificed, so Jesus sacrificed his very life for the sake of the world. And the Eucharist *we share* is our participation in this salvation, and our thanksgiving for it.

It is not a passive thanksgiving, however.

"A true Eucharist is never a passive, comforting moment alone with God, something which allows us to escape the cares and concerns of our everyday life. **Eucharist is where all these care & concerns come to focus, and where we are asked to measure them against the standard of Jesus** when he proclaimed for all to hear that the bread that he would give would provide life for the entire world. But it will do so only if, finding ourselves with a basket of bread, we have peered deeply enough into the heart of Christ to know what to do with it." - Fr. Paul Bernier, SSS

(Source: *Living With Christ*, 9/2018)

And perhaps this is a message we can take from the Gospel today.

Formed and transformed by the Eucharist, it is a person of faith
... who sees that God's love and mercy is sorely needed in this world.
Scripture says, *the Lord gives sight to the blind, cares for the oppressed, protects strangers and sustains widows*. As *Domus Dei*, that is, the House of God, the Church's mission, our individual mission, is to see that God's house is in order
... by seeing to it that justice (i.e. ensuring all are properly cared for) is made manifest in this world, at this time and in this place.

This is who we are. We, *the Church*, give thanks to God for God's generous gifts *by sharing* the good news of salvation and by giving our time, talents and treasure so that no one is left uncared for - **that no one is left without.**

At this Liturgy of God's Care and Concern, let us remember that "*wealth isn't what you've got, but what you'll give to do a good that needs to be done.*" —unk

We still participate and make real in people's lives *the Sacrifice* given
... "*once for all.*"

Our pennies make divine dreams happen!