

Hello Friends of St. Francis,

All of our life is a gift of God. All that we are and all that we have belongs to God. Does our fear and insecurity belong to God also? Only in Eucharist with gratitude can we honestly express our trust in God and offer our whole livelihood back to God.

May God bless you with trust!

Enjoy the following Gospel reading and reflection.

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<http://stfrancisa2.com/service4justice/>

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November 8, 2009, is the Thirty-second Sunday in Ordinary Time.

A reading from the holy gospel according to Mark 12:38-44

In the course of his teaching Jesus said to the crowds,
"Beware of the scribes, who like to go around in long robes
and accept greetings in the marketplaces,
seats of honor in synagogues,
and places of honor at banquets.
They devour the houses of widows and, as a pretext
recite lengthy prayers.
They will receive a very severe condemnation."

He sat down opposite the treasury
and observed how the crowd put money into the treasury.
Many rich people put in large sums.
A poor widow also came and put in two small coins worth a few cents.
Calling his disciples to himself, he said to them,
"Amen, I say to you, this poor widow put in more
than all the other contributors to the treasury.
For they have all contributed from their surplus wealth,
but she, from her poverty, has contributed all she had,
her whole livelihood."

REFLECTION:

At Creighton University Fr. Larry Gillick, S.J., tells this story. "Upon sitting down to read the evening's paper after dinner, my father would take off his shoes and socks. If a car were to come into our driveway, my mother would run around the living room straightening up. She would pick up his shoes and socks and throw them quickly down the old clothes shoot, down into the basement, where the shoes could be retrieved the next morning, ah yes, by my father. He would protest that anybody worth coming to our

house was worthy of meeting us as we were. He was a lawyer, but always lost that case.

As we prepare for this Sunday's liturgy we might pray with our attempts at straightening up so as to be worthy of the presence of Jesus in the Word and in the Sacrament of the Eucharist. My father's ways, at least in this case, is the approach of Jesus. He loves us the way He finds us, but loves us enough so as to not leave us there. We can pray these days with our being worthy of His coming up our driveways and into our heart-homes and embracing us whether or not we have our shoes on or off, or confined to the basement. We can pray with the little human experiences of being found, and finding others, just as is.

In today's Gospel Jesus and His disciples are people-watching. Jesus warns His disciples against following the scribes' self-important struttings and religious practices. The Jews who enter the temple are putting money into the poor box as alms. A widow drops in her two little coins. This becomes a highpoint for Jesus. She has little as she donates; others have much and contribute out of their surplus. She gave all she had; the others gave some of which they had plenty.

When we enter the holy building of the church, we do not drop our little coins in the treasury. We drop our fingers into the basin of water which first welcomed us into the Church. We drop some water on our upper selves as a reminder that Jesus has dropped into our poverty and has made it a treasure. We enter the holy space, not as aliens, but as holy belongers returning to "re-member" ourselves to the community of the parish and Church through the life, death and resurrection of Jesus.

I am not exactly sure why the widow was going to the temple, perhaps she did so to regain a sense of being in the community of the People of God, the Jewish nation. I often wonder why people come to bless themselves as they enter and participate in the Holy Eucharistic Liturgy. Perhaps some attend out of fear. Perhaps some come to ask for something special, or to convince God that they are trying to be good. I am sure there are so many other reasons good and others very good.

The big question always is, "Why be good if God loves us whether we are good or not?" We do good things, not out of fear nor manipulating God's love, we do good, because that is who we are! We do not drop our real selves into the Holy Water font and pick them up on the way out. The widow put in most of the little she had and went in. Jesus drops all that He has into our lives and we leave the church, because that is who we are: The Sent, The Missioned, The Massed, Re-membered, The Blessed.