

32nd Sunday (B)

- When Mark was organizing his gospel, he must have considered the story of the widow to be especially significant, because he kept it for the very last scene in Jesus' public ministry.
- Throughout the gospels, what Jesus appears to abhor more than anything else is hypocrisy.
- His harshest condemnation of the scribes and the Pharisees is that they are hypocrites.
- In this passage, whilst Jesus hates the scribes' parading around and claiming honour that is not their due, what really sees him condemn them is their mistreatment of widows 'while making a show of lengthy prayers'.
- We cannot praise God in prayer while at the same time mistreating our neighbour. That is hypocrisy! Our actions are an extension of our prayer.
- We cannot celebrate the Eucharist on Sundays and fail to live it the rest of the week!
- Today's Gospel sums up everything Jesus has said about what it means to be his disciple: The temple treasury is a symbol of the Christian community.
- Some people have many talents & they contribute generously to the community; others, like the widow, feel that they have very little to offer, but they give what they have all the same.
- We might be tempted to compare different people's contributions, but we would be sure to get it wrong.
- Jesus draws our attention to the widow.
- She has very little - only two single copper coins.
- She could have thought that what she had was not worth offering.
- She could have compared her offering to that of the people around her & been too ashamed to make her contribution.
- She could have given one piece & kept the other.
- What impressed Jesus was that, simply, without shame or false humility, she gave all she had. Jesus presents her as model for us all.
- Writing to the Christian community in Corinth, Paul has this to say:
'There are varieties of gifts [charisma], but the same Spirit; there are varieties of ministries [diakonia], but the same Lord; there are varieties of ways of energizing [energêma], but it is the same God who inspires them all in everyone. To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good'
- The Spirit of God has given each of us special gifts, &, whatever our life experience has been, there is a special way of loving now that only we can give - No one else in the world has ever been in exactly the same circumstances; no one else has exactly the same opportunities; no one else has exactly the same relationships – as I do.

- When we place our trust in God's creative energy within us, & when we love, we are continuing the ministry of Jesus, & his heart will reach out to others through us - each one of us is invited to contribute our gifts to the building of this community of love.
- We are not asked to give what others give; we are not asked to give what we do not have; we are not expected to offer what we used to be & used to have, or what we would have been or would have had if things had gone differently in our lives; we are not asked to give what we would like to have had to offer, or what others expect of us.
- God knows us, God understands our hearts.
- He longs for us to come as we are, for all he wants of us is our love & the ways in which we can make this love real for others.
- People watching at the temple treasury that day would have thought that the widow had given nothing worthwhile.
- They may have even thought that they could manage quite well without her apparently paltry contribution. Jesus saw things otherwise.
- She put in more than all the others because she gave herself fully without holding back.
- There are many ways in which we contribute to the community.
- The significance of our financial contribution is borne out by what can be achieved in our parish through financial support.
- The parish newsheet each week is full of the community building activities of the parish, & there are many others that go unnoticed: Some generously offer of your time & experience to help as members of the Parish Pastoral Council; others in the liturgy in various ways, each one contributing according to your gifts to build & maintain our family of faith.
- Some of you take the body of Christ to those who cannot join us here, helping them to know that in their sickness they are precious members of our community.
- Jesus in this today's gospel encourages every one of us to give ourselves in love to the building of his body - He needs us all, & we need each other.
- We need the old & the young, we need the well & the sick, we need everyone's love to support us in our faith & hope as we strive to draw closer to Jesus.
- The strength of a family, community or society is measured by the care it gives to its weakest members.
- We might think that we have little or nothing to give, but that is not true.
- We have ourselves to give, & if we offer to the community our small amount of love, our small amount of time, our small amount of patience & experience - & offer it as best we can with all our heart, Jesus will see, even if no one else does.