

“Blessed are the poor in spirit; for theirs is the Kingdom of heaven” (Mt 5:3). This verse from the Sermon on the mount is explained in reverse as Jesus cautions against the hypocrisy of the scribes. They like to be honored with places at the banquet or seats at the synagogue, but they do not have a servant’s heart. Where they should be generous to the poor, they place heavy burdens upon them. If they persist in their selfish ways without repentance, the Kingdom of heaven will not be theirs.

In contrast to this selfish outlook, Jesus praises a widow who has very little but is thankful to God and offers all that she has. “They have all contributed from their surplus wealth, but she, from her poverty, has contributed all she had, her whole livelihood” (Mk 12:44). The widow recognizes all that she has is a gift from God and she is thankful and offers it back to God.

This Sunday we celebrate the Solemnity of the Body and Blood of Christ. God the Father gave us his very best. He sent his Son to us. Jesus gave his very best for us. In love of the Father and in love of humanity, Jesus offered his life for us, an acceptable sacrifice to the Father for the sins of humanity. That we may possess a more joyful life, God is rich in mercy constantly offering us pardon for our sins.

Such generosity on the part of God calls for us to be generous like the widow. Though we have very little, we should give our all. At the end of the Book of Tobit, the Archangel Raphael reveals his identity and offers sound advice of how we can show our gratitude to God.

- “Bless God and give him thanks before all the living for the good things he has done for you, by blessing and extolling his name in song. Proclaim before all with due honor the deeds of God, and do not be slack in thanking him” (12:6).
- Praise God for all his wondrous deeds. The words of the Archangel remind us of the great commission to the apostles and to us: go to the ends of the earth and proclaim the Good News.
- “Do good, and evil will not find its way to you” (12:7). Jesus preformed miracles and cured the sick. Unless we are a skilled doctor or nurse, we cannot offer cures but we can do good by offering care. The attention we show to others is a remedy for many of the ills of this world.
- While prayer and fasting with the right intention are always good, better yet we can offer alms. “It is better to give alms than to store up gold; for almsgiving saves one from death and expiates every sin” (12:8b-9a). To share freely lightens us of the burden of material possessions, comforts others, offers us joy and brightens God’s day.

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