

32nd Sunday (B)

In our Gospel today we hear Our Lord teach us about the virtues of humility and generosity.

To teach the crowd about humility He admonishes the scribes. As He tells us, they like titles and being seen in public and all the other privileges that went with the territory. They were only concerned about themselves, as He says they devour the homes of widows. I assume this means they charged widows burdensome fees and things like that, essentially destroying their home.

Then He teaches them about generosity, as He notices a widow put in two small coins in the treasury. Rich people put surplus into the treasury, not really affecting their ordinary income. But she gave everything in those two small coins that she gave, showing that donation to really be priceless.

These two virtues help us to overcome two dangerous vices, two capital sins to be exact: pride and greed. Because to the Fall we all suffer from these two to some degree.

We now have a sort of natural pride, a selfishness, a tendency to put ourselves and our desires first over another. Our society echoes these same sentiments as something good to be pursued. How many times have we heard the following: “Just worry about yourself,” Or “Put yourself first,” Or “All I want to do is get mine.” All of these reveal the pride that all of us suffer from due to the Fall. We only do what we want to do, and won’t listen to anyone else who says

otherwise. Parents and teachers encounter this in children of all ages. I as a priest encounter this often when trying to help someone see that the Church's position is correct.

And so humility counters pride. It helps us to not take ourselves too seriously, to actually see the person in front of us, and to realize we are not in total control of our lives. Humility ultimately helps us to see how much we need God. We wouldn't be alive if it weren't for God. He created us from nothing, and continues to hold us in existence. If He would forget to think about us we would simply vanish, as if we didn't even exist. This is how dependent we are on God, and only humility helps us to see this, and to live this out by our conduct towards God and others.

We also suffer from greed, that is a desire to have and acquire things. To a point we need stuff: house, clothes, transportation, things like this. But we can go to far and have more than what we need. There is comfort in having stuff. Or sometimes we want something because it's new. We don't need it, but its newer and has better features. These are examples of greed in our lives.

Generosity counters the greed inside of us. By our greed to want to take in and gather. But generosity freely gives away without counting the cost. That widow gave two small coins, but it was everything she had. She was generous by what she gave. How many of us can say that we gave God everything we have?

So let us be renewed in cultivating these virtues in our lives. Humility puts others before ourselves, and leads to seeing just how dependent we are on God. And generosity helps us to freely give what we have to others. But let us be willing to give God our all. To really give Him our heart. He died on the Cross for me and for you. Let us try to give at least some of ourself back to Him.