

Dear Parishioners,

Jesus is a great teacher, and we are his disciples; that means we are his students. What we read this weekend in the Gospel of Mark is an important lesson on trust. Jesus and his followers were in the Temple in Jerusalem watching the people put money into the treasury. Of course, the men were on one side of the temple, the women on the other, so Jesus and the disciples must have been situated in such a way that they could see everyone making their contributions. The wealthier members obviously gave impressive amounts of money. Jesus was more impressed, though, with the widow who donated her mite: a coin which perhaps would have been large enough to buy a small amount of bread to survive for a day. It was all she had. Because she had no husband to provide for her needs, she was totally dependent upon the goodness of the community to provide what she would need for the rest of her life. It was the responsibility of the community to take care of her every need.

When Jesus pointed her out to the disciples he was trying to teach them an important lesson on trust. You see, the widow gave so much more than the very last coin she would ever have. She also gave her trust in God and her faith in the community to provide everything she needed in her life.

She is a reminder to us that there is poverty in this world far beyond financial destitution. Perhaps our greatest poverty is a lack of dependency and trust in God. As a society we have become so self-reliant that we do not always feel we need God's grace, or the love of the Church for our well-being, security, or peace. Yet, as we look at the world around us we see profound depression, insecurity, tremendous violence, and division at every level of human life.

This can even be true for those of us who are active in the faith. This has been true in my own life. Sometimes I find myself wanting to be totally in charge, totally in control of every aspect of my life, my parish, my church... When I function out of that mindset I am impoverished because I am not trusting in God's will for me; nor am I trusting in you.

Our widow friend teaches us that we are all in this thing together with very important needs; we need each others' forgiveness, we need each others' support, kindness, affection - love. We are more dependent upon God's grace and the love of the community than we might perhaps realize most of the time. The widow teaches us about the need not just to be with each other in our worship, but also to be with each other as the Church. Then, our worship can provide us with the grace we need to love each other as a community outside of worship as well.

In joyful hope,

Fr. Tim Seigel