

**V**olunteerism is in sharp decline. Every group, from political parties at election time to community and parish groups and charities, finds it increasingly hard to get people involved to help out with a cause. The Gospel of the Widows Mite has been viewed in different ways. Is it a critique of the temple elite, living off the donations of people like her? Or is it reminding us that God does not measure people by what they earn, their qualifications and outward show – but by their inner motivation and heart? Maybe it is both. There is the old joke about the chicken and the pig that saw the church sign saying, ‘Help feed the hungry!’ The chicken thought it was a really good idea as they could offer ham and eggs. The pig said, ‘That’s easy for you to say, but for me it’s a total commitment!’

Our country has so many charitable organisations, their sheer volume surprises people from other countries. Some have wondered where State responsibility lies in all this, when charitable groups can sometimes just address the very edges of human woes. There is both a personal and a state duty of care to the needy.

**Sanctus**  
Holy, Holy, Holy Lord God of hosts.  
Heaven and earth are full of your glory.  
Hosanna in the highest.  
Blessed is he who comes in the name  
of the Lord.

Hosanna in the highest.

**After the Consecration**

The mystery of faith.

We proclaim your Death, O Lord,  
and profess your Resurrection  
until you come again.

## THE COMMUNION RITE

The peace of the Lord be with you always.

**And with your spirit.**

**Lamb of God, you take away the sins ...**  
Behold the Lamb of God, ...



## GIVING TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE

The last time we heard this set of readings, featuring the two poor widows of the first and third readings, we were deep in covid times. Many swore that the experience would change us all: that we would not focus on acquiring and getting, but on each other. And yet, for so many, things went rapidly back to normal.

We are in November – a time of both remembrance and letting go. Death is the ultimate letting go, but there are a whole lot of moments that we can surrender – be it willingly or reluctantly – our health, wealth or independence and embrace the possible. The women in both gospels were desperately poor and gave

themselves totally into God’s hand, with the sure conviction that he would give them the support they needed.

The widow of the first reading is cooking her last meal and, when asked, offers it to the passing Elijah – and she is rewarded a hundred-fold. The woman of the Gospel has only a few pennies which she gives freely. We can be sure she was rewarded. What about us? What will we place before God? Will we give from our surplus, or from our core – giving from our very selves, confident that God will embrace us and bless us on this journey of life? ■

— Tom Cox

## Reflection

In what ways do you resemble the scribes and the widow?

## Lesson

The widow’s action is sincere and her offering to God is total.

## Prayer

Lord, mould us into the image of your Son, Jesus, who though independent became dependent, though rich became poor, though powerful became powerless. Amen.

Lord, I am not worthy  
that you should enter under my roof,  
but only say the word  
and my soul shall be healed.

**Communion Antiphon** (Cf. Ps 22:1-2)

The Lord is my shepherd; there is nothing  
I shall want.

Fresh and green are the pastures where he  
gives me repose,  
near restful waters he leads me.

**Prayer after Communion**

Nourished by this sacred gift, O Lord,  
we give you thanks and beseech your mercy,  
that, by the pouring forth of your Spirit,  
the grace of integrity may endure  
in those your heavenly power has entered.  
Through Christ our Lord.

Amen.