

Monday's Gospel: All That She Had

Gospel for Monday in the 34th Week of Ordinary Time, and commentary.

Gospel (*Lk 21:1-4*)

At that time, Jesus looked up and saw the rich putting their gifts into the treasury; and he saw a poor widow put in two copper coins. And he said, “Truly I tell you, this poor widow has put in more than all of them; for they all contributed out of their abundance, but she out of her poverty put in all the living that she had.”

Commentary

Jesus is in Jerusalem and goes again to the Temple, after purifying it from the merchants who had turned it into a den of thieves (cf. *Lk* 19:46). And he sees that among the pilgrims who have come to the Temple to leave their offerings, the rich are giving “out of their abundance.”

Thus their offerings are not true alms, since they don't come from what they possess and need (cf. *Tob* 4:7). Hence their almsgiving was not a real sacrifice, but rather a sign of ostentation.

This is how they also become thieves, since they take possession of a human glory that does not belong to them. They do not practice almsgiving as the Master taught: “when you give alms, sound no trumpet before you . . . do not let

your left hand know what your right hand is doing, so that your alms may be in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you” (*Mt 6 : 2.3-4*).

But then a poor widow came by, not to beg, which would have been understandable, but to put in two small coins, which was all she had to support herself.

Certainly the Temple treasury would be greatly enriched by the large sums of the rich, so that the widow’s two small coins seemed insignificant and of little use. But her alms were very effective, since almsgiving “is acceptable according to what a man has” (*2 Cor 8:12*).

Saint Josemaría reflected on this Gospel scene and wrote: “Didn’t you see the light in Jesus’ eyes as the poor widow left her little alms in the temple? Give him what you can: the merit is not in whether it is big or

small, but in the intention with which you give it” (*The Way*, no. 829).

In truth, Jesus’ heart would have been won over to see someone give the tiny amount they had to live on. With these two coins the widow gave her whole life to God.

And through her offering the widow becomes rich before God (cf. *Lk* 12:21). Our Lord says that “this poor widow has put in more than all of them.” Thus she becomes like Jesus, who “though he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor, so that by his poverty you might become rich” (2 *Cor* 8:9).