November 1, 2019

Scripture

**Luke 21:1-4**
When Jesus looked up he saw some wealthy people putting their offerings into the treasury and he noticed a poor widow putting in two small coins. He said, "I tell you truly, this poor widow put in more than all the rest; for those others have all made offerings from their surplus wealth, but she, from her poverty, has offered her whole livelihood."

Our Scripture Reflection

What touched Jesus’ heart about the poor widow whom He observed in the Temple precincts that day? It was not because she was financially poor. No, it was because her heart was PURE. She did not look over her shoulder to see what others were giving. She did not approach the funnel-like gold vessel into which coins were thrown with hesitation. Her face did not look as though she was sad or concerned. She tossed the little she had without fanfare and with trust that she had pleased God. And she had.

Food for your Journey

So why on earth would [Jesus] turn around and praise a woman for endangering her already endangered life to support an institution he condemns? The simple answer is, he doesn’t. Read the story carefully; he doesn’t. Centuries of stewardship sermons notwithstanding, Jesus never commends the widow, applauds her self-sacrifice or invites us to follow in her footsteps. He simply notices her, and tells his disciples to notice her, too. This is a moment in the story when I’d give anything to hear Jesus’ tone of voice. Is he heartbroken as he tells his disciples to peel their eyes away from the rich folks and glance in her
direction instead? Is he outraged? Is he resigned? What does it mean to him, mere seconds after he’s described the temple leaders as devourers of widows’ houses, to witness just such a widow being devoured? And worse, participating in her own devouring?
Here’s a telling postlude: immediately after the widow leaves the temple, Jesus leaves, too, and as he does, an awed disciple invites Jesus to admire the temple’s mammoth stones and impressive buildings. Jesus’ response is quick and cutting: “Not one of these stones will be left upon another; all will be thrown down.”

A Prayer from the Heart

Dear Jesus, No one in history gave more for others than You. May Your example of giving inform and challenge my stinginess in giving. May I learn to trust the providential care of my Father in Heaven as You did, completely. Amen