

“...but she, from her poverty, has contributed all she had ...”

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

Once upon a time, many years ago, on a very dark & dreary night, a sudden cloudburst stranded a newlywed couple on a remote, country road. Unable to go any farther, when the rain ‘let up’ a bit, they got out of the car and half-ran to a dimly lit farmhouse, sitting back from the road.

When they reached the farmhouse, an elderly couple, carrying a kerosene lamp, met them at the door. Explaining their predicament, the young man asked:

“Could you put us up until morning? A place on the floor or a few easy chairs would be fine.”

Just then, a few grains of rice fell from the young woman’s hair onto the floor. The elderly couple exchanged a brief, knowing glance.

“Why surely, children,” said the elderly woman. **“We just happen to have a spare bedroom. You go get your things from the car while my husband and I freshen it up a bit.”**

The next morning, the newlyweds got up early and prepared to leave without disturbing the elderly couple. They dressed quietly, put a \$5bill on the dresser, & tiptoed down the stairs.

As they passed the living room doorway, they found the old couple asleep on chairs. They’d given them their only bedroom. The young man tiptoed back up the stairs with another \$5 bill.

I share this story with you because it’s a modern illustration of the beautiful story about the widow that I/Deacon Vic just read to you from the Gospel of St. Mark.

*Like the widow in the Gospel, the elderly couple gave, **not** from their surplus, but from their **want**. Moreover, in both cases, they gave, not only generously, but also joyfully, from the heart!*

*Obviously, the 2 stories invite us to ask ourselves how **we** give:*

*Do we give **grudgingly**?*

*Do we give **dutifully**?*

*Do we give **thankfully, i.e., because we want to, you ask?***

Well, I am glad you asked that question—or two ...or three!

1st, I want to clarify that I am not just talking about giving money, which is certainly important. I am also talking about giving of ourselves—our energy, our time.

For example: **how** do we give of ourselves & our time **to our God** in Sun. worship, daily prayer?

For example: **how** do we give of ourselves & our time **to our family** in support & affection?

For example: **how** do we give of ourselves & our time **to our neighbor**, in concern and service?

Do we give **grudgingly**, because we **have** to—lest we be penalized or criticized in some way?

Do we give **dutifully**, from a sense of **obligation**—wishing, deep down, we didn’t have to?

Do we give **thankfully**, because we **want to**—with a generous heart, like the widow/elderly couple?

2nd, I want to further clarify that we can give of ourselves to different people in different ways:

For example: the best gift.....To an enemy.....is forgiveness

To a friend.....is loyalty

To a child.....is good example

To a father.....is honor

To a mother.....is our heart

To a neighbor.....is a hand.

I now close, counting a few ways that God has been 'generous' to us:

***We ask for a flower...he gives us a bouquet.
We ask for a drop of water...he gives us an ocean.
We ask for a grain of sand...he gives us a beach.
We ask for a blade of grass...he gives us a meadow.
We ask for something to eat...he gives us his body & his blood.***

*May our Almighty, all Generous God, our Abba, bless you—some more,
the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Amen.*