

Father Dave's Homily

11/11/12 32 B

- A number of studies have been done of charitable giving in our country. Almost all of them show that, as a percentage of their income, lower income Americans give more than well-to-do Americans.
- In fact, the percentage goes down as income goes up, until you get to people who earn over a half million a year. Top executives (e.g., Bill Gates) and top golfers (like Woods, Mickelson) and some other athletes are known to be generous with their vast surplus wealth.
- These studies confirm that the story of the poor widow in the gospel is relevant today. So often, those who have very little are those who are most generous. They mirror the trust of that widow and the generosity of the widow who fed Elijah the prophet.
- But God's word today is more than a reflection on what we do with our material resources. As much as preachers may be attempted to use it that way, it's not primarily an opportunity to talk on stewardship of our financial resources, even though God's word does deal with that subject.
- No, God's word gets to the heart of the message that we are totally dependent upon God for everything we have. All that we have from God is a gift. And it seems those who have what the world considers little in the way of those gifts seem to appreciate that fact the most.
- This weekend, in our parish, we are focusing upon a group of people who are challenged by a lack of health. We are celebrating the Anointing of the Sick for those with chronic, ongoing health issues. Many are not able to get to Church regularly because of these issues.
- Still others are not even well enough to be able to come this weekend, and I intend to visit them in the coming week or two.
- Like the widow in the gospel, we can easily miss them. They can almost be invisible since many of them can't be a regular part of our parish celebrations and may only be able to leave home for doctor's appointments.

-- But Jesus notices them, just as he noticed that poor widow. Jesus understands their poverty of spirit, which may or may not have to do with a lack of financial resources.

-- We pray for them and for their healing today as we celebrate this special sacrament with them.

-- And as we do so, we are challenged to have eyes, ears and, most importantly, hearts to notice their poverty. We have opportunities to minister to them through simple gestures like running errands or offering a ride when they need it.

-- Not only that: we have opportunities to be ministered to by them. Often, they are the “prayer warriors” in our parish, because they have the time to devote to this ministry. And they give us an example in their patient endurance of suffering.

-- Finally, both today’s celebration of this sacrament of healing and God’s word challenge us to realize our own neediness. We are powerless without the grace of God. All we have in life—materially, health-wise, spiritually—is a gift from our gracious God.

-- When we realize that, we are more likely to imitate the utter trust of the poor widow in the gospel, who held nothing back from God.