

## Homily for the 7<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time 2022 Year C

“The amount you measure out will be the amount you receive back in return”.

Those strong words of Christ always strike a response in the human heart because we all know at the deepest level of our being that we have not always been as generous as we have been called to be.

The amount we measure out has always been a problem for us, and it is something upon which we shall be judged.

Someone once asked Mother Teresa of Calcutta how much should they give? “Give until it hurts” was her reply.

It must be wonderful and a great consolation when life is drawing to its close to have been a person like Mother Teresa, to have given absolutely everything, to have held little or nothing back, and to go back to God with utterly empty hands.

We, I suppose, will approach God with those words of Christ ringing in our ears, weighed by the guilt of our many failures in generosity.

Let me say two things about those words of Christ.

Firstly, I do not think Christ spoke those words to instil fear into his followers. If your motive for doing an act of kindness or generosity is fear, fear of God the Heavenly Policeman watching over your shoulder; or fear of God the Accountant, writing everything down, then that is just as unworthy a motive as doing an act of kindness just for the reward you will receive in Heaven.

Secondly, we should not be so quick as to sell ourselves short. Granted, most of our lives are not full of the dramatic gestures of generosity of a Mother Teresa, but if we look a little closer at our lives, there has been a fair amount of this ‘measuring out’ going on, and we may not have been too much aware of it at the time.

People lead more heroic and generous lives than they give themselves credit for.

Look to your own personal circumstances over the years. Imagine the amount of generosity and self-sacrifice involved in successfully raising a family. I am

sometimes amazed at what I see, all that constant caring, loving, nurturing, teaching, safeguarding, guiding, worrying, and 1001 sacrifices that you have never given a second thought to, because you did it instinctively through love.

You never thought of the price.

What enormous amounts of love and generosity you have measured out over the years.

Think of how much goes into a loving relationship like marriage. How many sacrifices each may have to make for the other when times have not always been smooth over the years.

For some it has been very hard living up to those awesome promises, 'for better or for worse', when for the most part it has been for the worse.

What enormous amounts of silent tears, heartache, pain, patience, understanding, and forgiveness is measured out in some marriages, to get through the bad patches and to hopefully get to the good times again.

And to those of you who are now widowed, the enormous sacrifice of giving back into our Father's safe hands the one you loved, your soul mate, the one you shared so much with, good times and bad, and who you thought would always be there to lean on.

"The Amount you....."

But now, didn't Christ also promise in the Gospels that acts of generosity and selfishness would also have a disproportionate reward, 100 times over.

So, what do those words of His mean?

Perhaps He is not talking about measurement and size of reward at all. Perhaps He is reassuring us that no act of generosity will ever leave us the poorer.

It is often our insecurity that makes us draw back when our heart prompts us to respond in a generous way. To respond generously often involves a bit of a risk, the risk of losing some of my time, my money, or my privacy. So I hesitate, hold back and the moment is gone forever.

Christ's words could mean that you are never the poorer because of an act of kindness.

You might not always be immediately conscious of how you have been enriched, but it is the lived experience of many that those other words of Christ are also true, "It is in giving that you receive".

Personal time, love, wisdom, money, or skills, have no use or value unless they are expressed and shared in some way.

We are enriched, not so much by the possession of them, but through the sharing of them.

We are never left the poorer through an act of loving kindness or generosity.

The amount we measure out means we will always receive in return.