

## Homily for Thirty-second Sunday of the Year – B



**Fr Michael says:**

### **The Widow's Mite**

Simple but challenging lessons are learnt in dramatic ways, as we see in today's Scripture readings. Elijah is fed by a widow who had practically nothing and who is rewarded abundantly for her faith and her generosity – she does not lose out on the exchange! Christ shows us how committed He is to us, in the gift of Himself, to win us back to Him through salvation. The widow's mite of the Gospel is on the one hand a denunciation of the ostentation of the leaders of the People and a revelation of what genuine religious behaviour is. She commits herself totally to God in the gift of all that she had in total trust! So the test of a gift is not what it amounts to in itself, but what its loss means to the giver. Unless it hurts to give – how deep is the reality of the gift? When what is given is desired fully by both parties, then we are truly in a spirit of sacrifice.

Mother Teresa tells the story of a beggar who came up to her and said: "Everybody is giving to you; I also want to do so. Today for the whole day I have only 30 cents and I give them to you." She thought to herself, "If I take the money he will have nothing, but if I refuse it, I will offend him deeply. So I put out my hands and took the money. I have never seen such joy on the face of the man at the thought that he too could give to Mother Teresa! In itself the money is very little, I can get nothing for it, but as I took it, it became like thousands because it was given with so much love. God looks, not at the greatness of the work, but at the love with which it is performed."

The way the widow in the Gospel behaved, is the fruit of a constant giving mindset in her, it is not something that is acquired easily, it comes from a whole series of little gestures of generosity. Her situation in life, poor that it is, has the advantage – in that we would not attract much attention, in that way we can be truly generous, because we are doing it for the right reasons and not for display! Nobody else but Jesus noticed her gesture, so we might ask how good are we at recognising what others do and affirming them. It is so easy to be totally self-absorbed and so do not care!

Kahlil Gibran, a well known Lebanese spiritual writer says: "It is when you give of yourself that you truly give. There are those who give little of the much which they have – and they give if for recognition and their hidden desire makes their gifts unwholesome. There are those who have little and give it all. These are the believers in life and the bounty of life, and their coffer is never empty. Through the hands of such as these God speaks, and from behind their eyes He smiles upon the earth!"