

THIRTY-SECOND SUNDAY OT - B

Last Sunday's readings focused on the two great commandments: to love God with our whole being and to love our neighbor as ourselves.

Our second reading for the past five weeks has been taken from the Letter to the Hebrews with its beautiful reflection on the perfect sacrifice of Jesus our High Priest.

Today's Gospel brings those themes together by giving us a tender example of loving God in a sacrificial way.

The poor widow contributes all that she has to live on to the temple treasury.

Both she and the widow in the first reading must have had great trust in God's providence in order for them to make such heroic gifts.

As does our Responsorial Psalm today, the Scriptures remind us again and again of the faithfulness of God.

It is this divine generosity that should inspire our steadfast discipleship and our faithful stewardship.

By holding up the example of the widow and her heroic generosity, Jesus is challenging the temptation to give only from what we have "left over" after we take care of all of our personal needs and desires.

Jesus is always trying to shake us from our tendency toward complacency.

As followers of Jesus we are called to imitate his total self-gift in all that we do.

I think back to four weeks ago when we had the Gospel of the encounter of Jesus with the rich young man.

Jesus did not try to make him feel guilty, rather, Jesus looked at him with love and called him to a deeper level of discipleship.

Jesus looks at us in the same way every day.

Today begins National Vocation Awareness Week.

As Catholics, we firmly believe that God has a plan for our lives.

He calls some to marriage, some to the priesthood, and others to religious life or to live as generous single persons.

Fully living our own vocations - and helping our young people to discern God's call - is a serious duty, but also a joyful one.

During this week, please encourage the young people in your life - children, grandchildren, students, and friends - to be open to considering that God may be calling them to the priesthood or religious life.

We have in our parish the beautiful ministry of the Vocation Cross.

3

As each person or family takes the Cross home for a week to pray for vocations it is a reminder to each of us that our daily prayer should include a petition for an increase in vocations to the priesthood, diaconate, and religious life.

Please consider hosting the Vocation Cross in your home.

We need to pray for those whom God is calling, that they will be courageous and generous in their response.

We also need to pray for the perseverance of our seminarians who have made the countercultural choice to serve others.

Pray also for our deacons, for their health, and for their families who support them in their important ministry.

And, of course, please pray for all our priests.

As we know all too well here in Merrillville, there are currently not enough priests to have one per parish.

We priests need your prayers as much as you rely upon ours.

Finally, please prayerfully discern how God might be calling you to participate in the ministries of the parish so that together we can faithfully serve the mission Christ has entrusted to his Church.

As God blessed the efforts of the widow in today's first reading, may God bless and multiply the gifts we bring as we live out our vocation with generosity and trust.