Spirituality
Pencil Preaching





by Pat Marrin

View Author Profile
patrickjmarrin@gmail.com.

Join the Conversation

Send your thoughts to *Letters to the Editor*. Learn more

November 21, 2021
Share on BlueskyShare on FacebookShare on TwitterEmail to a friendPrint



"She has given all she had to live on" (Luke 21:4).

Dn 1:1-6, 8-20; Luke21:1-4

Today's Gospel about the widow in the temple occurs as Jesus arrives in Jerusalem before the final confrontation with his enemies and the events surrounding his death. He has reached the moment when he will empty himself completely and surrender his life on the cross to complete his mission. In this context, the action of the poor widow who surrenders her life to God by placing her entire livelihood in the treasury mirrors his own surrender.

Perhaps Luke has in mind the widow of Zarephath (1 Kgs 17:7-17), who offered the last of her flour and oil to feed the prophet Elijah before she and her son prepared to die. This widow will later have her son raised from the dead by the prophet. Was Jesus thinking of that widow as he watched this woman drop her two small coins in the treasury? Or is Jesus reminded of the poor widow whose son he raised when he encountered the funeral procession in the town of Nain (Luke 7:7-11)?

Jesus is moved by the widow's plight and by her deep generosity in contrast to the wealthy donors making a show of their gifts from their surplus. Was another widow also in his thoughts -- his own mother back in Nazareth, without Joseph and soon to be deprived of her beloved son? Mary will soon be standing below the cross looking up at Jesus as he takes his final breath. Perhaps it was in the temple as he watched the poor widow that Jesus decided he would entrust his mother to the Beloved Disciple before he died (John 19:26).

Widows were powerless and dependent, God's *anawim*, and Jesus joined them on his final descent toward death. He claimed his kinship with them and all the poor. They were the last who would be first, the least who were the greatest in God's eyes. The only wealth that counts is to know God so well that you can surrender everything you have and are to the divine embrace, trusting that God will never abandon you.

Advertisement