

32nd Sunday of Ordinary Time (B)
November 8, 2009

Give to God what you can...honestly, genuinely, and authentically.

“Merit is not in whether a gift is big or small, but in the intention with which the gift is given to another” (St. Josemaria Escriva).

One day, Fred received a letter in the mail.

There was no return address, no postage, and no markings of any kind except for his name on the front.

Upon opening the letter, Fred realized that this was a letter addressed to him from God.

And in this letter was a notice from God that He would like to share a meal with Fred today.

“Today!” thought Fred. “Of all days, why today? I don’t have anything to serve Him. I better go out and get something right away!”

So, Fred went out at once.

It was already 4:00 in the afternoon and according to the letter from God, Fred only had 1 hour to buy some food, bring it back home, and get it ready to serve to God at 5:00.

Since Fred was a poor man, he could only afford a few simple items such as a loaf of bread, a half a pound of turkey, a few vegetables, and a small jug of water.

It wasn’t much, thought Fred to himself, but at least it’s more that what I currently have at home.

As Fred paid for his purchases and began his journey home, he was so anxious and excited about sharing a meal with God that he almost ran over a few people trying to get home in time.

Two of the people that Fred almost tackled on his way home were a poor, homeless couple trying to find dinner themselves.

As Fred rushed by this couple, the man spoke up and caught Fred's attention, "Excuse me, sir! By chance, can you spare anything so that my wife and I can get something to eat for ourselves?"

Fred replied, "No, sorry. I can't spare anything. You see, I need what I have because I have a very special guest who will be arriving at my house any minute now for dinner. So, I need this food to serve Him. Sorry I can't help you."

"Oh, I understand," said the man sadly as he turned toward his wife and began to walk away.

As Fred watched this man and his wife walk away, he realized that they needed the food a lot more than he did.

So, Fred called out to the couple, gave them his bag of groceries that he just purchased, and proceeded to head back home while thinking what he was going to do now.

God is coming over for dinner and I have no food to serve Him.

I'm just going to have to apologize and hope He understands.

As Fred nervously walked up to his front door, he noticed a letter sticking in the door jam.

And as he opened the letter, Fred realized that it was another letter addressed personally to him from God.

It said, "Thank you for dinner. I enjoyed the turkey sandwiches, vegetables, and water. It was a great meal! I couldn't ask for more of a wonderful and giving host. We'll have to do this again sometime. Love, God."

Being a disciple of Christ is about giving everything we have to serve God in some way or another so that we might achieve holiness.

The widow in today's Gospel gave everything she had...she gave from her poverty, which was the only thing she had.

In doing so, she gave honestly, genuinely, authentically, and fully. Her intentions were in the right place in that she was dedicated to completely serving God by giving Him all that she had.

The wealthy scribes did not practice this themselves.

Rather, they donated from their wealth, which happened to be an act that meant no significant loss for them.

Their goal was to gain recognition and prestige and they achieved this when they threw a few coins into the collection.

The goal of the widow wasn't recognition or prestige like the scribes. Rather, she simply wanted to give what she could and what she had. And when she did so, she made no fuss about it, no announcement, and no decree of any kind.

She simply quietly and carefully, threw in what she could and what she had for the collection.

In other words, she completely gave herself.

And doing so is discipleship.

Now, I'm not saying that those who make large donations are evil or aren't disciples of Christ.

That's not the case.

Rather, what I'm saying is that one must carefully consider what one's intentions are when giving.

Does one give to gain recognition and honor and glory?

Or does one give simply to give so that he or she may humbly receive from God in return holiness and grace?

That is – or at least should be – the reason why we give and why we give all that we are and all that we have, namely, to grow in holiness.

And holiness happens to the extent that we not only give completely, but also that we surrender completely to God's grace.

It is completely and fully self-emptying in hope that we may be filled up with the grace of God.

This means that we sacrifice all that we have.

We serve God and our brothers and sisters as best as we can.

We share our gifts, our God given gifts, with those who may need our help and our expertise.

We give our time to those yearning for attention and a loving heart.

All in all, we give our lives to one another just as Jesus gave his life for us, his brothers and sisters.

This is no small feat...and it can be scary at times.

But, the rewards for this are out of this world.

May we pray for the courage and strength to give it our all!

And may we seek the Sacraments, especially the Most Holy Eucharist – the true Body and Blood of Jesus Christ – as a source of fuel that will help nourish us so that we may truly and willingly give to God all that we have and all that we are in exchange for an increase of holiness.