

Commentary on the Gospel for Mon, Nov 27th 2017

He said, “I tell you truly, this poor widow put in more than all the rest; for those others have all made offering from their surplus wealth, but she, from her poverty, has offered her whole livelihood.” Luke 21:2-4

Today’s Gospel reading is a heartwarming account of the theological virtue of charity. While it certainly is good to give from our wealth, it is virtuous to give from our poverty.

I grew up with a wonderful role model of someone who gave from her poverty, my mom. Another role model was my mother-in-law. Both always giving from their poverty. Their giving was of themselves. Always there for others. Always! My mother-in-law has passed away, but her example continues to live in my heart. Today is my daughter’s birthday and my wish for her is to soak up the virtuous charity lived out by her grandmothers.

I would be remiss if I didn’t mention two additional role models in my life that made the virtuous and self-sacrificing act of giving from their poverty. My youngest brother and now sister-in-law were young and pregnant and chose to continue with their unplanned pregnancy amidst a culture and law that offered them a different option. Today Joshua, my nephew, has his own bundle of joy, Sawyer. Thanks be to God!

St. Maximilian Kolbe, canonized on October 10, 1982, was declared a Martyr of Charity. During my journey into the Catholic Church, I had watched a documentary “Ocean of Mercy: Three Lives – One Vision – No Limit”. This had been my first introduction to St. Maximilian Kolbe and while riveted at this man’s story, at that time I was focused on St. Pope John Paul II. Several years ago, Fr. Michael Gaitley came to give several talks at an event held on Creighton’s campus. During these talks, I learned of Fr. Gaitley’s “33 Days to Morning Glory: A Do-It-Yourself Retreat in Preparation for Marian Consecration”. This caught my attention because I had made a consecration to Jesus through Mary following St. Louis de Montfort’s Way of Total Consecration. As I listened to Fr. Gaitley, I knew I wanted to re-consecrate and better understand how to live out this consecration daily. To my delight, St. Maximilian Kolbe was an instrument in this book.

The main thing I knew about St. Maximilian Kolbe was how he willingly gave up his own life so that a man who had been condemned to death could live. He made the ultimate sacrifice, he gave his own life. This event happened in Auschwitz during World War II. During my re-consecration process, I came to understand how St. Maximilian Kolbe’s life was a continuous string of virtuous acts. He gave from his own poverty. He was ordained a priest in 1907 and offered his whole livelihood advancing the mission of the Church. He is our modern-day role model. St. Maximilian Kolbe, pray for us!

As we are winding down the month of November, the month which has been dedicated to praying for the Holy Souls in Purgatory, this is a beautiful way to offer an act of charity, an act of love, to give from our poverty.