

We live in a very image-conscious society. Status, respect and 'face' are very important. How we are seen is more important than who we really are. Scribes and Pharisees are presented today as very image-conscious. It was more important to be seen and thought of as good and holy than in being really so.

Jesus warns his disciples against the wrong kind of religion. True religion is relating rightly to God and to one's neighbour with love, honour, and respect.

Love doesn't calculate; love is more precious than gold!

To be a widow is a symbol of solitude and of emptiness. Elijah went to a widow and asked her for something to eat and she gave him everything that she had without reserving anything for herself. All the power of God - in the service of a poor, weak, abandoned and ignored woman!

The widow in the Gospel is also poor and insignificant. The poorest people in Jesus' society are represented by orphans and widows. With these two widows we have two histories with a very clear lesson: ***To be sure that the heart of God is touched, one does not have to be important, nor know a lot, nor be educated, nor be prestigious with resplendent clothing.*** It only matters that we give what we have, and believe in His promises without holding back anything.

The greatness of this widow contrasts with the misery of the Pharisees that criticize her. Her material contribution is insignificant, yet her gift is total. Jesus admired this gesture and he praised her, because he does not measure our human acts with our scale. We generally remain at the level of appearances, but the Lord searches the heart.

"One gives a lot when he gives his all, even though that all - may be just a little bit". Saint Paul tells us somewhere in the Bible that Jesus said that: ***"There is more happiness in giving, than in receiving"***.

These widows should stimulate our generosity. **When we begin to think beyond material goods,** we will find innumerable situations where our Christian charity can become a reality, then we share our time, our life, we give who we are before the Lord.

What matters is not what we have or what we can get; not what we can do or what people think of us. What matters is that I be fully, freely, truly my real self before God and before others. Can I let go of everything to give myself totally into his hands with the sure conviction that he will give me the support I need? When a lot of us do that our faith will be confirmed.

As you will be aware today commemorates the 100th anniversary of the armistice that brought to a close “the war to end all wars.” This is significant historical marker for not only Australia, but also for Europe and in the latter stages the United States of America. Significant numbers of Australians were present in the various theatres of war that constituted the First World War.

Let’s have a minute of silence honouring this...