

**«But she [this widow] out of her poverty
has put in everything she had,
all she had to live on» (Mk 12:44)**

This sentence comes at the end of chapter 12 in Mark's Gospel. Jesus is at the temple in Jerusalem. He is observing the people and teaching his disciples. We see with his eyes a scene full of various people coming and going: officials in charge of worship, dignified leaders in their long robes, rich people putting their lavish offerings into the temple treasury.

And then a widow comes along. She belongs to a category of people who were socially and economically disadvantaged. No one pays any attention to her as she throws two small coins into the container. Instead Jesus noticed her. He called his disciples to him and taught them, saying:

**«But she [this widow] out of her poverty has put in
everything she had, all she had to live on»**

“Truly I tell you...” Jesus often used this phrase before teaching his disciples something that was very important. By focusing on that poor widow, Jesus taught us to look in the same direction and recognize that *she* is the model of a true disciple.

Her faith in the love of God is unconditional. Her only treasure is God himself. She hands over her whole life to him, but also wants to give him all she can for those in greater need than herself. This trusting and total surrender of herself to the Father foreshadows, in a certain way, the exact same gift Jesus will make with his passion and death. She is one who is “poor in spirit” and “pure of heart,” as Jesus had proclaimed and lived.

«To be ‘poor in spirit’ means to put our trust not in wealth, but in the love of God and his providence.. (...) We are ‘poor in spirit’ when we allow ourselves to be guided by love for others, because then we will share with those in need and give them whatever we have: a smile, our time, our possessions, our abilities. Once we have given everything out of love, we are poor, that is, we are empty, with nothing of ourselves; we are free and have a pure heart.»¹

The proposal Jesus makes turns everything upside down! At the center of his thoughts are those who are small, poor and in the last place.

1. Chiara Lubich, Word of Life, November 2003.

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This Word of Life invites us, above all, to renew our total trust in the love of God and to see things as he sees them - to see beyond appearances, without judging or depending on the judgement of others and to value all that is good in each and every person.

It suggests that when we reason according to the Gospel, we give all of ourselves and this is what builds up a community that lives in peace, because then we take care of one another. It encourages us to live the Gospel in the small things of everyday life, without calling attention to ourselves, but giving generously and trustingly, keeping only what we need and sharing the rest. It calls us to focus our attention on the least, and to learn from them.

Venant was born and grew up in Burundi. He tells his experience: «In my village, my family could have boasted about having a fine estate and an abundant harvest. However, my mother was fully aware that all we had came from God's providential love. She always gathered the first crops of the season and distributed them to our neighbors, starting with those most in need, keeping for us only a small part of what was left. From her example, I learned the value of giving a gift without expecting anything in return. I understood that God was asking me to give him 'the best part'—in fact, to give him my whole life!»

Prepared by Letizia Magri
and the Word of Life team

Each month the Focolare chooses a Scripture passage as a guide and inspiration for daily living. The commentary on it was originally written by founder, Chiara Lubich (1920–2008). Today this Word of Life, written by an international commission and translated into 96 different languages, reaches several million people worldwide. For audio and videos resources about the WoL, visit focolaremedia.com



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