

“Being magnanimous with God for the salvation of our own soul and other souls”

1. **God’s love is for all human beings**, from the greatest to the least among us. A real obstacle to receiving that love is deliberate sin and disobedience which is pretty clear upon reflection, but less obvious but just as real an obstacle is: **stinginess of life, heart, and soul.** The first thing to note is: **God is more interested in receiving the free self-gift of our self rather than in receiving our possessions.** After all, all of our possessions ultimately belong to Him anyhow. The only thing that doesn’t automatically belong to Him is our mind, heart and will (soul) which we are free to give to Him or not. What we give must be from our hearts or it is an empty gift; that is what Jesus is criticizing the **Pharisees** for: they do the “right things” as a pretext of virtue, but in reality their hearts are far from the Lord. How much we give back to God in terms of our time, our talent, and our treasure (money and possessions) shows the gift of our self, if they come from our heart, from the motivation of love for God and neighbor. The widow in the Gospel today shows this in a powerful way. She gave all she had - her whole livelihood as Jesus says. **This doesn’t mean we all have to be poor or destitute.** What it means is we have to daily more and more give our all to God. We are to be more and more detached in our heart from the passing things of this life, to utilize them but not be controlled by them, to make use of all the gifts God has given us to store up treasure in Heaven, by living a life of self-giving love for God and neighbor, which I spoke about last weekend on: **what true love is about.**
2. The **radical trust** of the widows both in the first reading and in the Gospel are an example we are called to follow. **Do we trust in God’s Providential care for us? Or do we try to rely on our own resources and mind and will too much,** which ironically leads to anxiety, worrying and lashing out at the people around us? The old truth of theology is that **grace builds upon nature**, so yes, God does expect us to develop our gifts and talents and to contribute to the common good of our Church and world, but what about when difficulties arise? **Do we trust in the**

Lord to get us through the trials and tribulations of life: to realize that “*all things work for the good of those who love God*” (see Romans 8)? **God is in charge, He guides and directs each moment of each day (His Providence), but always integrated with the mystery of our human freedom.** We are not puppets on the divine stage, but free human agents called to love in truth: God and neighbor. Developing a true life of prayer is the key to putting this into practice, which I think it is safe to guess, both of these widows had in abundance. The Blessed Mother, who also was a widow early on in life, is **the** model for us of openness and trust in God’s design for her life; it all flowed from **her deep interior union with the Trinity**, which enabled her to trust God with her whole being in the midst of often great spiritual darkness and sorrow, e.g., at the Nativity when she had to give birth in a cold stable or a cave, fleeing into Egypt to protect Jesus from the murderous King Herod, and beneath the Cross. We need to always turn to her in love, asking her to help us to do the same: to beseech God to give us the grace to love Him with an ever more pure heart, as well as in our relations with other human beings. **Praying the Rosary daily** brings us to this reality of trusting in God ever more deeply with the help of our Blessed Mother, and enables us to help Our Lady of Fatima in the most important mission of bringing about the conversion of hardened sinners in our world today. Those of us who have the gift of Faith must help more with daily prayer and penance for that intention, as it is very dire spiritual times we are in! Are we willing to be more generous in that regard?

3. **Yes we are called to make a gift of our life to the Lord. We only have one shot**, as the letter to the Hebrews lays out today, “*Just as it is appointed that human beings die once, and after this the judgment, so also Christ, offered once to take away the sins of many, will appear a second time, not to take away sin but to bring salvation to those who eagerly await him.*” This is the Scriptural basis for the Catholic **rejection** of the pagan religious doctrine of re-incarnation which is taught by many Eastern religions and in the New Age religion of the post-Christian West. We are not going to come back as a chicken, a dog, a cat, a cow

or another human being. **This is it, people!** We will be judged by God based on this one life. Our eternal destiny depends on it; that's why this life is **serious** business in the Catholic worldview. Not that we are not called to have some enjoyment and happiness in the good things of this world, but to always put them in perspective within a spirit of daily prayer and penance, in that, all things need to serve **our eternal end** of being with God forever, and not allowing the good things of this life: be they our family and friends, the beauties of the natural world, our livelihood, the non-sinful pleasures of body and soul, to distract or cause us to fall away from what needs to be the treasure of our heart: **God** and the gift of our Catholic Faith which leads to Him. And as we grow in spiritual maturity we are called by the Lord thru our Lady to give up some of those legitimate pleasures as an offering of love and sacrifice for the conversion of other people - we see that model of an increasing life of penance and prayer in all the saints as they grow older and mature spiritually. Because we only live once, all of our actions in this life have an eternal significance - nothing is insignificant even the smallest thing! **That's the wisdom of St. Therese's Little Way of holiness.** The **near death experiences** of people who come back to earthly life point to this truth - seeing one's whole life in an instant, both the good and bad parts. **Again that was the secret of the saints:** *they tried to do everything big and small with the same love for God, and in time God was able to transform them in His own holiness.* It also made them the most **joyful** people who ever lived. Why? Because if every action is important and God is always with us to help us choose the good, then nothing in life is BORING. All of us are called to the same gift of sanctity: *to love God and neighbor with an ever more profound self-gift of our life with an ever increasing pure heart.* May the Lord help us more and more each day to give to Him our entire life, and to grow in love of neighbor with a magnanimous heart instead of a stingy one, always striving to see the image of God in others and realizing souls eternal destiny are at stake - as this earthly life is our one shot that determines where we end up in eternity: **Heaven, Purgatory leading to Heaven, or Hell.** True charity is ever more generous daily prayer and penance for the salvation of souls: the path that leads to Heaven! God bless you.