

Thirty-second Sunday in Ordinary Time

In today's Gospel Jesus lines up the religious leaders of his day and lets them have it with both barrels. It may come a surprise to learn that hypocrisy is the sin Jesus condemns most frequently in the Gospels. He could not bear it. And nor should we.

Being powerful and rich is not a problem in itself. As with all gifts, it is what we do with them that show us up for who we are. The problem with religious, political, social, or even family power, and the wealth that can come from it, is that it is so seductive. The more powerful and rich we become, the more we can think everything is our due. We can take our eye off the Giver of all gifts and avoid our responsibility to share with those who are left with nothing.

In the second part of today's Gospel, Jesus does not praise the widow because she is poor. There is no nobility in poverty. Jesus praises her for being generous and he indicates how the poor teach the rich about what really matters in life.

May this Eucharist, then, give us strength to avoid being seduced by power, riches, and greed. May we use whatever gifts we receive to build up the entire human family and may we never stand condemned by Jesus for coming here each Sunday and saying one thing, and then leaving here and doing the very opposite.

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