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24 MONDAY

Monday Last Week of Year

Apocalypse 14: 1 - 5

Ps 23: 1 - 6

Luke 21: 1 - 4

Jesus often used very ordinary daily events to draw lessons and messages for his disciples and listeners. He was very observant of how people behaved, and (in St Luke's gospel) particularly sensitive to women. The incident in today's reading is perhaps one of His best known observations and comments. People putting offerings into the treasury was an everyday event, quite like people publicly contributing to various charities and appeals in our modern societies. But Jesus noted how the rich people were making their offerings, presumably rather handsome ones, as compared with the two little coins that a very poor woman contributed. And He pointedly remarked that that poor woman had contributed more than all the others did, for she gave what she actually needed to live on, whereas the rich people were giving from their surpluses, and would not be feeling any suffering or deprivation because of their donation. To this day, it is a classic observation that, proportionately, poor people give more of themselves to charities and to helping others in need. Even our taxation systems in most countries seem to place a heavier burden, proportionately, on the poor. But the rich are praised for their 'generous' donations.

But let us not make judgements on people's intentions and motives. Rather, let's seriously ask ourselves how much do we give of ourselves for other people, whether in money terms or in time or in helping and being involved in serving the needy or neglected in our societies. Let's also learn from Jesus to be observant of what people are doing and what's really happening around us, and find in everyday events a message of God's love.