

Dear Brothers and Sisters



When I was a seminarian our Rector, Fr. Gino, spoke about the dangers and temptations we would face in the priesthood.

One of the biggest dangers and threats to our ministry, he said, was that of becoming a 'padre pecetero' – a priest who uses his ministry to line his own pockets. He told us that people were very forgiving and merciful, that they would put up with a lot of shortcomings their priests, but one thing people had a hard time swallowing was a priest who fleeced the flock for his own benefit.

This danger - love of money- is not exclusive to priests. It is something that all of us face.

Jesus warns his disciples of the "Scribes...who devour the houses of widows, and as a pretext, recite lengthy prayers."

The widow observed by Jesus in today's Gospel is the antithesis of the Scribe. Not only does she refuse to use others for monetary gain, but she gives away all that she has.

I recently heard of a funeral in which the son of the deceased was giving the eulogy for his father. He said that the one memory that stood out for him from his childhood, was the time the family had very little money. They couldn't pay the bills, and his parents could hardly put food on the table. They were a large family, and the kids were aware of their financial straits. One day his father gave all the children some money, and led them into the kitchen. He opened the window, and invited them to throw the money out. The kids had handfuls of dollars, and began to throw them out of the window, watching with glee as the wind took the money away.

The family never starved. They didn't get evicted. The children were no longer worried about how much money they had.

In his eulogy, the son said that his father had taught them many things in life, but that lesson was the most important of all.

Like the widow in today's Gospel, his father invited them that day to throw away all that they had.

Sounds crazy. This is the craziness of God. He is the one who has given everything away out of love for us. He did not cling to his dignity, but emptied himself for us.

Fr. Sean