

St Paul today sounds like a man handing on a torch before walking into death.

You can almost hear the urgency in his voice.

**“I charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus...”**

This is not casual advice.

This is a dying apostle speaking to the next generation.

And what does he say?

Preach the word.

Stay faithful.

Endure hardship.

Do the work God has given you.

Because Paul knows something terrifying can happen to the human soul:

people stop wanting the truth.

He says: **“The time will come when people will not tolerate sound doctrine.”**

Not because the truth stops being true.

But because people prefer comfort to conversion.

That sentence could have been written yesterday.

We live in a world drowning in opinions, yet starving for truth.

People want spirituality without repentance.

Religion without obedience.

Christianity without the Cross.

And St Paul says: that road leads nowhere.

Then suddenly in the Gospel, Jesus sits down opposite the treasury.

Watching. That detail matters. Christ watches how people give.

The rich come forward publicly, large sums going into the treasury.

Then comes a widow. Invisible to almost everyone else.

She drops in two tiny coins. And Christ stops everything to point at her. Why?

Because heaven measures differently.

The rich gave from surplus.

The widow gave from trust.

That is why her offering mattered.

Not because the amount was large, but because her heart was surrendered.

And perhaps that is what makes this Gospel uncomfortable.

Because God is not simply asking for occasional gestures.

He asks for the heart.

St Norbert understood that.

He lived surrounded by wealth, comfort, status, and privilege.

A successful cleric with an easy future ahead of him.

Then one day grace shattered his illusions.

A violent storm threw him from his horse, and suddenly death became real.

Eternity became real. God became real.

And Norbert realised he could not keep living half-heartedly.

That is one of the great dangers of comfortable Christianity.

Not open rebellion against God. Mediocrity.

A faith that never fully burns.

A soul divided between Christ and the world.

And that is deadly because it slowly numbs the heart.

Norbert became radical after his conversion.

Not strange. Not theatrical. Simply serious about God.

He embraced poverty. Prayer. Preaching. Reverence. Holiness.

And people listened to him because they sensed he actually believed what he preached.

That is what gives the saints power.

Conviction.

And perhaps today the Church does not mainly suffer from lack of information.

People have endless information.

The problem is that many no longer burn with conviction.

The Gospel becomes background noise.

Prayer becomes occasional.

Mass becomes routine.

And slowly the soul drifts.

Then today's Gospel quietly exposes another illusion.

The scribes love honour, titles, respect, attention.

And meanwhile the holiest person in the Temple is a poor widow no one notices.

The Kingdom of God constantly overturns worldly measurements.

The people who appear important are often spiritually empty.

And hidden souls can become giants in heaven.

That should encourage many ordinary Catholics enormously.

You may never preach to crowds.

Never write books.

Never become famous.

But a hidden life lived faithfully before God has immense power.

A widow praying quietly.

A grandfather remaining faithful to Mass.

Someone carrying suffering patiently.

Someone returning again and again to Confession.

These things matter eternally.

And perhaps the deepest question in today's readings is this:

What am I actually giving to God?

Leftovers? Convenience? Spare time? Or my heart?

Because Christianity is not ultimately about admiration for Jesus.

It is about surrender to Him.

St Paul reaches the end of his life and says: **"I have fought the good fight."**

Not: "I lived comfortably."

"I fought."

And perhaps we need to recover that language.

Because the spiritual life is a battle.

Against sin.

Against laziness.

Against distraction.

Against despair.

And souls become holy not accidentally, but through perseverance.

The widow gave everything.

Paul poured out his life completely.

Norbert let grace overturn his comfortable existence.

And all three remind us of the same truth: Christ does not ask for part of us.

He asks for all of us.

Because only when a soul belongs completely to God does it finally become free.