

THE MESSAGE OF THE RECTOR MAJOR

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THE WIDOW'S MITE

**I found a handwritten letter on my desk
containing an offering for the poorest of the poor.**

Dear Readers,

Certainly, most of us can call to mind that in one passage of the Gospel, Jesus speaks to us of how great was the value of the little offering that the widow placed in the treasury of the Temple of Jerusalem. This donation – poor by human standards – was all that she had, however, and so it was very great in God's eyes.

Today I wish to tell you that I have experienced this myself many times. In fact, the latest occasion took place just yesterday. I had returned to Rome after having celebrated the intense, beautiful days of the Salesian Family Spirituality Days in Valdocco (Turin), in which 367 persons from 22 of the 31 official groups comprising the Salesian Family took part. This Salesian Family of Don Bosco is a huge tree with many branches!

Upon returning, I found a letter on my desk. It came from a small town in France. I am confident that my friend will allow me to speak about this openly, while safeguarding her anonymity, because things that are good and beautiful need to be made known.

You might ask yourself what made this letter so special in comparison with the many that I receive each day? The person who wrote to me is up in years – 92 years old – an Italian emigrant, a wife and mother, and today a widow. She wrote it in her own hand on her simple paper and sent with it an offering for the poorest wherever they might be in the Salesian missionary world.

There was nothing very special about that, however, given the fact that many people send their humble donations for the poorest and do much good in this way.

What made it so special is that this friend sent something very personal and of profound sentimental value: *she sent her wedding ring and that of her deceased husband and also a pyx with which one brings Holy Communion to those who are ill and homebound.*

I must confess that I was very moved. I read the letter a few times over, and I contemplated the wedding rings, the sign of their spousal love.

I promised myself that once the donation had been exchanged for money, I would bring it personally to one of the poorest mission places. With it, we will be able to help some very poor families with their basic necessities and also help educate a little girl of scarce

means. (I thought of doing this because I imagined that since the donor is a woman, she would be happy to know that her offering would go to educate a little girl so that she could have the possibility of a better future.)

I am also convinced that the rice that will be bought with this offering will also have a very special value added to it.

Finally some “good news”

We live in a globalized world that has many societies in which only bad news is broadcast: tragedies, natural disasters, violent deaths, etc.

And the thought comes: “Why can’t what is so profoundly human and which fills one with good sentiments – such as the story I just recounted to you – not be favored above the others and become news? These things ought to be news!” So that is precisely what I have decided to do: make it news. And I do so because I am sure it will make you as happy as it does me.

Greetings from East Timor

I am in East Timor as I write this to you, in the midst of very simple people, men and women living in rural areas – filled with much goodness and faith, and very experienced in suffering and sacrifice.

We just celebrated yesterday the feast of St. John Bosco. Very soon I will celebrate Holy Mass for a gathering of people in Fatumaca with the members of the Association of Mary Help of Christians.

I can see how the Salesian charism is putting down profound roots among these good, religious, and open people.

This is also our world. It, too, is news.

I wish all of you every grace and benediction