

**Many of us are at least a bit familiar with economics**

**It is defined as the science that deals with the production  
Distribution and consumption of goods and services;  
Or the material welfare of humankind.**

**But there is another kind of economics**

**One that deals not with the material welfare of mankind  
But rather the spiritual welfare of mankind**

**This economic system takes a different view of investment**

**And return on investment**

**It is a system anyone can invest in**

**You do not need a large portfolio to invest**

**You need a generous spirit**

**And the return will not necessarily grow your 401-K**

**It goes beyond that**

**For the return is eternal**

**The economic principals of this system are opposed to those of the  
world**

**They are based upon the law of the gift**

**The more we desire something**

**Give it away**

**Abundance comes from the willing gift**

**When we are intricately linked to God**

**---Who is nothing but Gift**

**We will never run out**

**We see this heavenly economic system at play in our readings today**

**In our first reading we find Elijah**

**The nation of Israel is suffering from a drought and famine**

**He is sent to a foreign land**

**Not to an Israelite widow**

**But to a gentile widow**

**A pagan widow**

**This is a sign of how low the Israelite nation has sunk**

**Their faith has rotted away**

**They forgot about God**

**They were relying totally on their own resources**

**And once famine struck the land**

**They have nothing to sustain themselves with**

**When the prophet Elijah encounters this widow**

**She is in bitter straits**

**Elijah asks for a drink of water**

**As she goes to get this**

**He asks for a small cake as well**

**Nothing much**

**Unless that is all you have**

She tells him she was going in to make one last meal for herself  
and her son

And then they will die

And Elijah makes her a promise

*Do not be afraid*

*Go and do as you propose*

*But first, make me a cake*

Remember, this is a pagan woman

She does not know the God of Israel

But she has tremendous faith

She gives what she has

Despite giving everything away

Perhaps because she gave everything away

She is rewarded

For a whole year the three of them received a return on her  
investment

*For the jar of flour shall not go empty*

*Nor the jug of oil run dry*

We see a similar situation in the Gospel

Again a widow is involved

Here we find Jesus in the Temple

He is sitting opposite the treasury

**He is also sitting opposed to the Pharisees**

**They are there hoarding all they can**

**Not just money**

**But honor, privilege, titles**

**Everything being done for the show**

**You can be sure that if they put anything into the treasury**

**Everyone will know how much they contributed**

**The widow enters the scene**

**Probably not even noticed by the Pharisees**

**What could she offer them?**

**They would see not only was she poor**

**There would be nothing to gain by associating with her**

**So they ignore her**

**But Jesus takes notice**

**And points her out to his disciples**

**Look at this poor widow**

**She has put more into the treasury than all the others**

**She has contributed all she had**

**Her whole livelihood**

**The stories diverge a bit here**

**Because we know how the widow of Zerephath was rewarded**

**We know nothing more of what happens to this widow**

**Other than the certainty that her investment was rewarded by God**

**Perhaps in this life**

**Certainly in His Kingdom**

**Abundance comes from the willing gift**

**The economy of heaven has similarities to the economy of the world**

**Both require risks to be taken**

**Both require investments**

**Both offer a return on investment**

**But what is invested**

**And the return are opposed to each other**

**When we invest in the world**

**We seek material rewards**

**It is so easy to fall into the trap of hoarding**

**Hoarding not only money**

**But power, sex, pleasure, reputation as well**

**Any of these and more**

**When we make them our god**

**We hoard**

**But when we do this, we find there is never enough**

**We are always looking for the next rush**

**But when we invest in the economy of heaven**

**When we listen to the invitation Jesus made to his disciples**

**His invitation to us**

**To invest everything we have and are**

**All our time, treasure and talents**

**When we do this**

**We find the more we give**

**The more we have**

**If you desire a stronger, more vibrant faith life**

**Become a witness**

**Tell your story, share it with others**

**If you desire more joy in your life**

**Become a bearer of joy to others**

**Become a gift to others**

**If we take our gifts, our talents and treasure**

**And we offer it to God**

**No matter how little the world might consider our offering**

**We place these into the heavenly treasury**

**Into a treasury that is filled with the grace and merits of Christ**

**This is how the widow's mite becomes more than all the other  
deposits**

**She unites her limited offering to the infinite offering of Christ**

**Where he who offered everything**

**Invites us to do the same**

**Not offering only what we can afford**

**But offering what we hold most dearly**

**Taking the risk to invest your very heart**