OFFERING:

THE WIDOW WITH THE TWO COINS

A Liturgy for the Parishes and the People of the Diocese of Camden
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INTRODUCTORY RITES

With the community assembled, the minister says:
In the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.
All make the sign of the cross and respond:
Amen.

Welcoming Hymn: Alma Misionera [Missionary Soul] or another suitable song

Then the minister, either a priest or a deacon, greets those present, saying:
May God, rich in mercy, who works wonders for His people, always be with all of you.
(Or other suitable words, preferably taken from Sacred Scripture)

All respond:
And with your spirit.

If the minister is a layperson, he/she greets those present, saying:
Brothers and sisters, give thanks to God, who is rich in mercy and works wonders for His people.

All respond:
Amen.

The minister prepares those present to receive the blessing with these (or other similar) words:
Contemplating the example of the poor widow of the Gospel, let us open our heart to God in thanksgiving for all of the gifts that He has bestowed on us and let us offer Him our whole life.
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*Luke 21: 1-4.* Christ does not look at appearances and was not untouched by the widow's gesture.

**Luke 21: 1-4** At that time, as Jesus looked up, he saw some rich people putting their offerings into the treasury box; He also saw a poor widow putting in two small coins, and He said: I tell you truly, this poor widow has put in more than any of them. For all these have contributed out of their abundance, but she of her want, has cast in all the living that she had. *The Word of the Lord*

The minister, if circumstances permit, briefly encourages those present, explaining the Bible reading, to faithfully discern the meaning of the celebration.

**Meditation from the Pope** *(Benedict XVI, November 8, 2009)*

The widow of the Gospel, and likewise the widow in the Old Testament, gives everything, gives herself, putting herself in God's hands for others. This is the everlasting meaning of the poor widow's offering which Jesus praises; for she has given more than the rich, who offer part of what is superfluous to them, whereas she gave all that she had to live on, hence she gave herself.[..] Jesus' sacrifice offered "once" sufficed for God to save the whole world (cf. Heb 9: 26, 28), because all the Love of the Son of God made man is condensed in that single oblation, just as all the widow's love for God and for her brethren is concentrated in this woman's action; nothing is lacking and there is nothing to add. The Church, which is ceaselessly born from the Eucharist, from Jesus' gift of self, is the continuation of this gift, this superabundance which is expressed in poverty, in the all that is offered in the fragment. *Benedict XVI, November 8, 2009.*

**Reflection on the Reading Proclaimed**

What splendid eyes has our Redeemer, who so beautifully rests his gaze on each one of our actions! Christ is not untouched by how much we can do, above all, when they are small things that only He has seen and that He will
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reward in His due time. In the scene, there are some rich people putting in large amounts of money for God. This is what their offering to the Temple means. Far be it from Him to condemn the rich people, as some writings have posited about this and other passages. On the contrary, surely He was pleased to see how those who have the necessary means put into practice the beautiful virtue of magnanimity. What would become of the Temple, of the great works of the Church if there were no people who are generous on a large scale! Also, far be it from Christ to show that kind of favoritism toward some or toward others. It's not only that God does not view appearances as men do. It is precisely because He does not view appearances that He was impressed by that poor woman. She has given everything for God - everything that she had for her existence! And Christ was not untouched by such a magnanimous gesture. He even communicated this to his apostles, saying: “Learn from that woman what it is to truly believe in God.” Give Him everything. And there are so many people who have given Him everything in our world, in this century that we live in, and perhaps it would be important to open our eyes more and not let ourselves be impressed by appearances, but rather by the gaze of Christ and do works with the generosity of that widow. Because to God she has not been forsaken. Because God does not abandon those who do works like that, but rather He is moved with love by their small acts of generosity. Let us just consider that, thanks to the widow's small act, she continues to be a model for us even now.

**The Presider:**
Lord, teach me to give everything for You and for others, with joy, generosity and charity.
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If appropriate, continue with the normal prayer. Among the invocations proposed here, the minister can select the ones that seem most suitable or add others directly related to the circumstances of the moment.

Let us give thanks and praise to God, the Father almighty, whose glory Heaven proclaims and whose goodness all of His creatures extol, and full of appreciation for the gifts received, let us say:

R/. Glory to you, Lord, for all of Your blessings.

- Heavenly Father, who in Christ, Your Son, has given us everything, let us never cease to praise You. R/.  
- Heavenly Father, who in Christ, Your Son, has given us everything, let us never cease to praise You. R/.  
- You who, with generous love, surpass the merits and desires of those who implore You, let us always sing with our heart and our lips of Your wonders. R/.  
- You who generously prepare and make available to us countless signs of Your love, let us, in receiving Your gifts, discover You, who are their source. R/.  
- You who taught your disciples to share their goods with others, let our brothers and sisters also benefit from Your gifts, so that they may participate in our joy. R/.
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THE PRESENTATION OF OFFERINGS

Distribute the "Offering" envelopes, invite parishioners to say the Personal Prayer:

**Dialogue with Christ (Personal Prayer)**

Lord, contemplating the example of the poor widow of the Gospel, I want to offer You my entire life, I want to give it to You unreservedly, as did the Virgin Mary. Grant me Your grace in this prayer so that this offering may be a reality by giving You all of my love and my whole being, with joy and generosity.

Lord, I cannot give You anything that I have not received from You; therefore I place in Your hands my love and my total dependence on Your will. With your grace I will be able to live unattached to things and I will know how to give myself to others more generously and more lovingly.

The minister invites the parishioners to come to the front and put their offering in a basket (or another creative way that the parish wishes to do it). Meanwhile, a little instrumental music can be played and then people can be invited to keep going to the front, meditating on the following song and praying individually.

**Song:** *Quiero Estar Señor en Tu Presencia* [I want to be in Your Presence, Lord]
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PRAYER OF BLESSING

The minister, if he is a priest or a deacon, with his hands extended, if a layperson, with hands joined, says the prayer of blessing:

Oh God, whose mercy has no limits
and whose goodness is an inexhaustible treasure,
we give You thanks for the blessings You have bestowed on us,
imploring you, in your goodness, not to abandon those You have heard but to make us ready for eternal goods.
Through Jesus Christ, our Lord.
R/. Amen.

CONCLUDING RITE

The minister, if he is a priest or a deacon, concludes the rite, saying:

May God the Father, with the Son and the Holy Spirit,
who has acted in you all
in accordance with the grandeur of His mercy,
protect you all with His blessing.

R/. Amen.

And may the blessing of Almighty God
Father, Son and Holy Spirit,
descend upon you.

R/. Amen.

If the minister is a layperson, he/she concludes the rite by making the sign of the cross and saying:
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May God the Father, with the Son and the Holy Spirit, who has acted in us all in accordance with the grandeur of His mercy, be blessed now and forever.

R/. Amen.

It is advisable to conclude the rite with a suitable song.

Suggestions of Hymns that can be used:
- Quiero Estar Señor en Tu Presencia [I want to be in Your Presence, Lord] (FCIII)
- Oh Señor Delante de Ti [O Lord, before You] (FCIII)
- Alma Misionera [Missionary Soul] (FCIII)
- Ofrenda Litánica [Litanic Offering] (FCIII)
- Quiero Servirte Mi Señor [I Want to Serve You, My Lord] (FC II)
- Bienaventurados [Fortunate Ones] (FCII – FCIII)
- Eso Me Basta [That's Enough for Me] (WLP Publications)

FCII = Flor y Canto [Flower and Song] 2nd Edition Hymnal
FCIII = Flor y Canto [Flower and Song] 3rd Edition Hymnal