

Forming Good Stewards

Good stewards are formed by other good stewards!

Please make sure this is distributed to the *pastor*, to the other *priest* and *deacons* in the parish, and to the *person who produces the bulletin*.

Bulletin Bites

August 7, 2016

Nineteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time

Luke 12:32-48

Option 1

“Of those who have much, much is expected”

Johnny Manziel had a very successful career as quarterback of the Texas A&M football team. He assumed the moniker of “Johnny Football.” Despite reports of erratic behavior on and off the football field, Cleveland used their 22nd pick to draft Manzziel in the 2014. At Cleveland he did not perform well on the field. Off the field his conduct was irrational, and possibly illegal. In less than two years he was released by the Browns. In June of 2016 his father stated, “He is a druggie . . . I hate to say it but I hope he goes to jail.” Much was expected of Johnny Manziel. He had the opportunity to be a positive role model for young people. He had much but chose not to be all that God had given him the ability to be. When Jesus said “Of those who have much, much is expected” he was challenging his disciples, and us, NOT to do like Manziel. God has given us much. Are we aware of all that God has given us? Have we used all that God gave us to the best of our ability? What have we chosen to do with it? Can we do better?

Option 2

“For where your treasure is, there also will be your heart.”

The trash we put on the curb to be discarded reveals much about who we are and what we do in life. It contains the packaging of the products that we treasure. It reveals where our heart is. What is in our trash? Is it packaging from the latest electronic games, the best type of athletic equipment, the current fashion in clothes [no matter how revealing], the appliances with the most features, containers that held gourmet foods, too many empty liquor bottles and beer cans, and the shredded documents of the fortune we are trying to amass? There are some people whose hearts are not revealed by their trash. They have no trash. Sadly, they have nothing to throw away. They do not have sufficient food and they have very little clothing. We would do well to remember the words of Jesus, “Much will be required of the person who has much, and still more of the person entrusted with more.” When we bring our trash to the curb we should ask, “How much treasure have I been entrusted with and what does this trash reveal about my heart?”

August 14, 2016
Twentieth Sunday in Ordinary Time
Lk 12:49-53

Option 1

“From now on a household of five will be divided, three against two, two against three.”

We are bombarded with advertising that promise products will make us feel better, look prettier, feel stronger, have an easier life and save money. Politicians are controlled by opinion polls and make promises they have no intention to keep. In today's Gospel Jesus paints a rather bleak picture of why he came, what he will do and the consequences he will suffer. He bluntly tells people that households will be divided because of him. An advertising agent or political adviser would tell Jesus he didn't have a chance to sell his product or get elected. But Jesus was not running for office and the only product he was selling was the love of God and his Kingdom. Jesus knew his life and message had angered the Jewish and Roman leaders of his day. He anticipated the treatment he would eventually receive. And he knew we would be treated no better. He was preparing those who would follow him and try to imitate him for the treatment we would receive for seeking the will of God and trying to do it.

Option 2

“I have come to set the earth on fire, and how I wish it were already blazing!”

Starting fires and setting relatives against each other seems like rather harsh words from the mouth of Jesus who consistently lived and taught what God told Moses to tell the Chosen People - to love God with our whole heart, mind, soul and strength; and to love our neighbor as ourselves. If we read the words of Jesus in the bright light of his life and teachings, we will understand that he does not intend or desire for families and others be divided. But he was aware that those who chose to follow and imitate him by *loving people and using things* to demonstrate that love would be rejected and abused by family and others who cling to cultural attitudes of selfishness that *loves things and uses people*. The blaze Jesus wished had already started is the fire of love that burns away self-centeredness and makes way for love of others. That blaze flickers in our world but Jesus expects us to make that fire much brighter by loving our neighbor as ourselves. Imagine a world on fire with such love. Imagine us as the source of that fire.

Solemnity of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary
Luke 1:39-56

“Blessed are you among women and blessed is the fruit of your womb.”

On November 1, 1950 Pope Pius XII, in his Encyclical Letter *Munificentissimus Deus*, proclaimed, declared and defined to be divinely revealed dogma that “. . . the Immaculate Mother of God, the ever Virgin Mary, having completed the course of her earthly life, was assumed body and soul into heavenly glory.” Some ask why, how, and when, and where? Those are fair questions. The simple answer is “It's a mystery!” But it is more important to ask, “Why not?” Why would Jesus not want to honor the young girl who accepted God's call to be his mother [at great risk to her life]; who carried him in her womb and gave birth to him in a cave; who watched him grow and was with him when he died on a cross and who rejoiced at his Resurrection; by assuming her uncorrupted body to be with him in heaven for eternity? The world would be a much better place if we all honored our parents, family, friends and strangers who often do so

much for us that we do not appreciate? Once again Jesus reveals to us that gratitude is the beginning of generosity.

August 21, 2016
Twenty First Sunday in Ordinary Time
Luke 13:22-30

Option 1

“Some who are last will be first, and some who are first will be last.”

A football team from an elite high school took the field wearing the newest and uniforms and equipment, lead by well paid coaches. The opposing team from a high school in a poor neighborhood came on the field wearing old and worn pads, scarred helmets and jerseys; all had been handed down for years. Nothing matched. The coaches were all volunteers. Who do you think won the game? Who would you have been cheering for? Do we try to understand the plight of those who struggle for the bare necessities of life: food, clean water, shelter, clothing and basic education? Or do we associate with those we think have it made, or made more than they need for themselves? The disciples asked Jesus if only a few would be saved. Jesus answers by saying all can be saved, but those who believe they will be saved by keeping company with the rich, the famous and the powerful will find it difficult to enter the Kingdom. They can do it, but they must be strong enough to also associate with those in need.

Option 2

“I do not know where you are from.”

What will we do if Jesus speaks those words to us when we finally meet him? Will our face go pale and our knees buckle? Will we be very frightened? Will we mumble, “I ate and drank in your company and you taught me”? What if Jesus ask us, “But what did you learn? Did you eat and drink in the company of the hungry, the homeless, the naked, the oppressed, the diseased? Do they know where you are from?” If people in need in our world know where we are from, Jesus will know where we are from. He will recognize us right away. He will be anxiously waiting for us to enter into his presence. Jesus is very clear: “People will come from the east and the west and from the north and the south and will recline at the table in the Kingdom of God. For behold, some are last who will be first, and some are first who will be last.” Where do we want to be when we all take our places in the God’s Kingdom, first or last?

August 28,2016
Twenty Second Sunday in Ordinary Time
Luke 14:1, 7-14

Option 1

**“Everyone who exalts himself will be humbled,
but the one who humbles himself will be exalted.”**

History is full of people who rose to power by use of fortune, corruption or force, or who used corruption to achieve a fortune to gain power. Many, if not all, exalted themselves by building monuments to themselves. Most who proclaimed their own greatness came to a brutal or humiliating end and their monuments were defaced or destroyed by those they oppressed. In

contrast, there are many who believe in Jesus and try to imitate him who have done great things without desire for recognition, riches or fame, some in total anonymity, simply because it is the right thing to do. Some of those Christians have been acknowledged as Saints of the Church, but they did not do what they did to declared a Saint. Who do we choose who to emulate; those who exalted themselves; or those who were later exalted because they did not seek recognition, riches or fame for themselves, but rather the good of others.

Option 2

**“Invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind, the unwanted;
blessed will you be because of their inability to repay you.”**

A wealthy parishioner noted to his pastor that Jesus dined with the rich and famous of his day. He asked, “Do you think Jesus would belong to an exclusive country club if he were here today?” The pastor answered, “I suspect he might, if he could afford it. But his guest would include people who could not afford it, people who need a bath and a new set of clothes, people who have not recently had a decent meal, people who are lame, who limp, or feel their way with a white cane.” The pastor then said to his parishioner, “You belong to a very exclusive country club. Have you ever brought such guest to your club?” The man said nothing. He had many possessions. The pastor added, “When we leave Mass and go into God’s world we are supposed to be Jesus present in that world. So, when we are at our exclusive country club, or any other group, Jesus *is* a member. We might want to start reviewing our guest list.”