

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

July 3, 2016

Fourteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time

Luke 10:1-12, 17-20

Option 1

“Jesus appointed seventy-two others whom he sent ahead of him in pairs to every town he intended to visit.”

When the twelve returned and reported what they had done in his name, Jesus began to prepare them for the reaction of the Roman and Jewish leaders. He spent time with them in prayer, was transformed before them and attracted thousands whom he fed with fish, bread and spiritual food. He then appointed seventy-two others to go in pairs to towns he intended to visit. They were to take no money, no provisions and no sandals. They were to rely on the response of the people who received them in peace and to whom they preached and healed, physically and spiritually. They went in pairs, some possibly as married couples, and did as Jesus instructed. They returned with reports of performing great deeds and realized that they did not need a money bag, or sack with their possessions or even sandals, to do great things in the name of Jesus. Through the twelve, and then the seventy-two, Jesus is teaching us that faith in God and the truth of His message is all we need to do great things for others. Do we have such faith?

Option 2

“The seventy-two returned, rejoicing, and said,

‘Lord, even demons are subject to us because of your name.’”

The seventy-two disciples that Jesus sent in thirty-six directions were amazed at their success. Did they really have faith in Jesus as they left on their mission? We can almost hear them grumbling, “He is sending us like lambs among wolves with no money, no provisions, no sandals, and we cannot even greet people on the way. Does he expect us to work miracles?” But off they went. Despite their doubts, they had faith in Jesus and they were able to do great things because of their faith. They performed miracles. When we feel called to step out in faith to imitate Jesus in our world, do we have doubts? Do we fail to act because of our doubts? Or do we act, despite our doubts, amazed at what we can accomplish when we have faith in Jesus? As a result of our Baptism it is our responsibility to nurture our faith in Jesus so we can constantly be amazed at what we can accomplish in His name.

July 10, 2016
Fifteenth Sunday of Ordinary Time
Luke 10:25-37

Option 1

“What is written in the Law? How do you read it?”

A scholar of the law asked Jesus a question. Jesus does a very Jewish thing. He answered a question with a question. He asked, “What is written in the law? How do you read it?” Jesus knew the scholar knew the law. The scholar responds by quoting *Deuteronomy 6:5 - **You shall love the Lord your God with your whole heart, being, strength and mind*** and *Leviticus 19:19 - **and your neighbor as yourself***. Jesus tells him to do that and he will live. But the lawyer looks for a loophole, “Who is my neighbor?” Jesus tells the story of the “Good Samaritan.” I have frequently traveled the road down from Jerusalem to Jericho in an air-conditioned bus. In the time of Jesus the journey was on foot through barren, dry, hot hills and valleys. Jesus uses the story to ask the lawyer “Who was neighbor to the man set upon by robbers?” The lawyer states the obvious, “The one who showed him compassion.” That should also be obvious to us. And the implications for how we should treat one another should also be obvious. Is it?

Option 2

“Which one of these three, in your opinion, was neighbor to the robbers’ victim?”

He answered, “The one who treated him with mercy.”

“Rabbi, why do Jews always answer a question with a question?” The rabbi responded, “And why shouldn’t we?” Jesus is a Jew. When the scholar of the (Jewish) law asked him, “Teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?” Jesus answered with a question, “What is written in the law?” The scholar quotes *Deuteronomy 6:5 **You shall love the Lord your God with your whole heart, being, strength and mind*** and *Leviticus 19:19 . . . **and your neighbor as yourself***. The scholar knew the law. It had been handed down by Moses. But the scholar (a lawyer) looks for a loophole: “Who is my neighbor?” Jesus answers this question with the story of the Good Samaritan, then ask, “Which one, in your opinion, was neighbor to the robber’s victim?” The scholar answers, “The one who treated him with mercy.” The scholar had no other choice. If we are true believers in Jesus, neither do we. Jesus challenges us to want for our neighbor what we want ourselves. And everyone is our neighbor, no matter how unlovable they may be.

July 17, 2016
Sixteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time
Luke 10:38-42

Option 1

“Lord, do you not care that my sister has left me by myself to do the serving?”

When Jesus visits the home of Martha and Mary the two sisters take completely different courses of action. Martha begins to prepare food and refreshments for her guest. Mary gives her full attention to what Jesus has to say. Both are doing a good thing. Martha is fulfilling the responsibility of a good host according to the custom of her time by caring for the visitor to her home. Mary is demonstrating her strong interest in what Jesus has to teach her. When Martha complains to Jesus that her sister is not helping her to do the serving, Jesus says that Mary has chosen the better part. Jesus is not criticizing Martha for performing her duty as a host for a

guest. But he is saying that his message is important and that it is good for Mary and others to learn from him. Jesus certainly appreciated the meal Martha was preparing for him, but his response to her means that spiritual food is more important than physical food. We must care of our spiritual life, then care for our physical life. Which life do we care about the most?

Option 2

“Martha, Martha, you are anxious and worried about many things.”

Martha is doing what was expected of a good Jewish woman of her day - preparing food for her family and guest. Her sister Mary, also a good Jewish woman, plops herself down at the feet of Jesus and absorbs every word He says. Martha finally confronts Jesus, “Lord, make her help me!” Jesus knows that Martha is not doing anything wrong. She is doing what she believes is expected of her. And she is doing it very well. Jesus suggest she should not be so concerned about what others expect of her, but should spend time to discern what God expects of her. What God expects of us can be quite different than what the world expects of us. We discern God’s will for us in prayer - prayer that is not about what we say to God, but about what we are willing to hear from God.. Fr. Hacker Fagot, S.J. [d. January 5, 2010] admits that “Too often my prayer is not *God, thy will be done!* but *God, thy will be changed!*” Do we pray? What is our prayer?

July 24,2016

Seventeenth Sunday in Ordinary Time

Luke 11:1-13

Option 1

**“I tell you, ask and you will receive; seek and you will find;
knock and the door will be opened to you.”**

When our parents would not let us have that fifth hot dog or third ice cream cone at the parish fair, did we feel they did not love us? If so, we are pretty normal. When we do not win hundreds of millions of dollars in the Power Ball or Mega Millions lotteries, despite intense prayers and great deals with God that we will share most of it with the poor, do we feel God is not listening to our prayers? If so, we do not understand what Jesus taught us about prayer. If we truly PRAY the Our Father and acknowledge and honor God, ask for what we NEED THIS DAY, and seek His pardon for our sins, then we will understand what he meant when he said, “*ask and you will receive; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you.*” Our parents knew that some things we wanted were not good for us. God knows that some things we want are not good for us. They will not help us gain eternal life. If we are sincere when we PRAY the Our Father, God will give us what we NEED THIS DAY to spend eternity with Him.

Option 2

“Lord, teach us to pray!”

Abraham bargains to save Sodom. He starts out with fifty innocent people. God agrees. Obviously lacking confidence he will find fifty, he bargains God down to ten. He could not even find ten, so Sodom is destroyed. The Old Testament covenants were bargains with God. God always kept his part. The patriarchs and Israelites were not so faithful. The disciples saw Jesus as a person who was faithful to the Covenant and a man of prayer. They asked Him, “Lord, teach us to pray.” He teaches them the Our Father. Then He tells the stories of the persistent woman and fathers who give their children bread and eggs, not snakes and scorpions. Are we confident

when we pray to God, Our Father in heaven, that His Kingdom, *not ours*, will come; that His will, *not ours*, be done; for our daily bread *not tomorrow's or next year's*; and to forgive our sins *as we forgive others*? Are we good stewards who are persistent in prayer *to learn God's will*? If at first you don't succeed, skydiving may not be your thing. Try prayer instead. *And keep trying.*

July 31, 2016
Eighteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time
Luke 12:13-21

Option 1

**“Thus will it be for all who store up treasure for themselves
but are not rich in what matters to God.”**

A man in the crowd ask Jesus to tell his brother to share the inheritance with him. Jesus tells him, “Take care against all greed . . . one’s life does not consist of possessions.” We live in a culture in which many judge us, not by the quality of our character but by the quantity of our possessions. The man who approached Jesus may have been rightly entitled to part of the inheritance. But his father may have intentionally given the whole inheritance to his brother. Only men could own property and designate who received an inheritance. In either case there was nothing Jesus could do about it, except possibly to appeal to the brother to be loving and just and caring, and to share the inheritance with his brother. His warning about greed and about not being “rich in what matters to God” was meant for the man, and for his brother who would not share. It is also meant for us. In the Sermon on the Mount Jesus taught us, “For where your treasure is, there also will your heart be.” Where is our treasure? Where is our heart?

Option 2

“Take care to guard against all greed.”

Greed is a very insidious and seductive emotion. It is at the root of all sin. It was a factor in the sin of the first man and woman in the Garden. They were not content to be grateful for all God had given them. They wanted to **be** God. George Carlin had a comedy routine about *stuff*. He said that we get *stuff* and then we need to get a house to put our *stuff*. Then we get more *stuff*, so we need a bigger house. We go on vacation and take some of our *stuff*. But we buy *stuff* we don’t need and come home with more *stuff*. Our lives are filled with *stuff*. And we get very attached to our *stuff*. Our attachment to our *stuff* stems from our erroneous belief that we are the source of all of our *stuff* and that we acquired it out of our own effort and ingenuity. When we acknowledge God as the source of all that we are and all that we have and all that we ever will be, we can enjoy the *stuff* we have and share it with others without being obsessed about getting and keeping more *stuff* than we really need to enjoy life.