

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

June 5, 2016

Tenth Sunday of Ordinary Time

Luke 7:11-17

Option 1

“As he drew near to the gate Nain, a man who had died was being carried out, the only son of his mother, and she was a widow.”

A crowd of people followed Jesus to Nain, a small village a few miles southeast of Nazareth. The body of the only son of a widow was being carried out of the city gates. Jesus, himself the only son of a widow, knew that a woman without a husband or son was facing more than the loss of loved ones. She was facing a life of deprivation, hardship and abuse. Jesus, moved with pity tells her, “Do not weep.” He then touches the stretcher and says, “Young man, I tell you to rise.” The man sat up, speaks, and Jesus restores him to his mother. Jesus was aware of the reality and challenges of the culture of his time. He did not avoid or turn away from people in their time of need. He did not consider their worthiness as a condition for his help. He acted with compassion and challenged them to have faith. The miraculous aspect of this event may distract us from the challenge of Jesus for us to understand our culture, to be aware of people in need, to have faith and to help without conditions.

Option 2

“A great prophet has arisen in our midst, “and “God has visited his people.”

When Jesus saw the people of Nain carrying a body out of the city and learned it was the only son of a widow, he was “moved with pity.” He knew that a woman with no husband or son to support her was facing a very difficult and dangerous life. Jesus also knew that someone who attracted the attention of the Jewish and Roman authorities by acts of compassion that lead people to proclaim, “A great prophet has arisen in our midst, “and “God has visited his people” was at risk of being arrested and killed. That did not prevent Jesus from doing what he knew was right. He understood that the prophet proclaims the truth and does what is right despite inconvenience, risk or consequences. We are constantly faced with choices between right and wrong, good and evil. Hopefully, we choose the right and good. More importantly, we are also faced with choices between the good, the better and the best. Jesus challenges us **to choose the best**, regardless of the inconvenience, risk or consequences.

June 12, 2016
Eleventh Sunday of Ordinary Time
Luke 7:36-8:3

Option 1

“He said to her, ‘Your sins are forgiven . . . Your faith has saved you; go in peace.’”

The Pharisees fastidiously observed the dietary and cleanliness laws of Moses and wore garments that set them apart from other people. They considered themselves superior to others who did not act and dress like them, or who committed what they considered to be a sin. The Pharisee who hosted Jesus confronted him when a woman the Pharisee considered to be sinful, anointed Jesus with oil and wet his feet with her tears and wiped them with her hair. Jesus does not call the Pharisee a sinner, but tells about a creditor who forgives two debtors, one who owed a large amount, one a small. He asks which would love the creditor more. The Pharisee squeamishly admits, “the one whose larger debt was forgiven.” It is tempting to be critical of the Pharisee. But, are we sometimes like the Pharisee? The difference between the woman and the Pharisee is that she demonstrated awareness and sorrow for her sins, and her faith in Jesus; he did not seem to be aware of his sinfulness or the need for forgiveness. Are we like the woman or the Pharisee?

Option 2

“The one, I suppose, whose larger debt is forgiven”

Kenny Rogers sings a Country Western Song, “*Oh Lord it is hard to be humble when you are perfect in every way.*” Could that be our theme song? Is the fact that we might be mistaken or wrong pretty far down on our list of possibilities? And we are proud of that? The ability to admit that we are in error or done evil does not come easy. For many people, the three most difficult words are not “*I love you,*” but “*I am wrong*” and “*I am sorry.*” And there is the very difficult, “*I forgive you!*” Contrary to the song by Kenny Rogers, true humility is the willingness to say, “*I am wrong!*” and “*I am sorry!*” when necessary. Sometimes the best way we can give is to forgive. The more we have to forgive, the more we need to give. God gave us all that we have and are. Have we used all that God gave us as he intended? If not, have we said *I am wrong* and *I am sorry*? God wants to say, *I forgive you!* in the Sacrament of Reconciliation. When was the last time we took advantage of that blessed Sacrament? Well, that’s too long!

June 19, 2016
Twelfth Sunday in Ordinary Time
Luke 9:18-24

Option 1

**“For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it,
but whoever loses his life for my sake will save it.”**

Imagine you were one of the disciples and heard Jesus say that. How would you react? You had listened to the wisdom of Jesus and seen how he cared for others and how they were cured because of their faith. You had seen people confess their sins and change their lives. You were with him when he was praying and heard him ask, “Who do the crowds say that I am?” After you and the other disciples mention several possibilities, Jesus mentions the “Son of Man,” a reference to the “Messiah.” Then Jesus says we cannot be so attached to life that we are afraid to lose it,

and that if we lose our for His sake, we will save it. Would you have continued to follow Jesus? We know at least twelve of his disciples continued to follow him. The eleven who remained after he was crucified and rose from the dead eventually understood and were willing to lose their life to imitate Jesus. Many of them did. Knowing that Jesus meant we cannot be so attached to life that we are afraid to lose it for imitating him, are we still willing to follow him?

Option 2

“But who do you say that I am?”

Jesus ask his disciples, “Who do the crowds say that I am?” They respond with several names or possibilities. Then Jesus ask, “But who do you say that I am?” Now the question is personal. To answer they must reveal what is in their heart and head. Their answer will tell Jesus how they feel about him. Peter says: “You are the Christ of God.” That took great faith and courage. The implications were enormous; Jesus waste no time in bluntly telling them that the “Christ of God” was going to suffer; be rejected by the authorities; killed and rise on the third day.” Jesus leaves nothing to the imagination. Then he adds what his closest friends were most afraid to hear: “If anyone wishes to come after me, he must deny himself, take up his cross daily and follow me.” We may be relieved that we were not present with Jesus two thousand years ago. But Jesus is present with us today - in the Eucharist; in his Church. He ask each of us, “Who do you say that I am?” How do we answer him? Are we willing to accept the consequences?

June 26, 2016

Thirteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time

Luke 9:51-62

Option 1

“I will follow you, Lord, but first let me say farewell to my family at home.”

Jesus and his disciples were prevented from entering a Samaritan town because they were on their way to Jerusalem. The Samaritans believed God was in their temple, not the temple in Jerusalem. The disciples asked Jesus if he wanted them to “call down fire from heaven to consume” the town. They had no idea how to do that but they had seen Jesus work many wonders and wanted Him to do it. Jesus knew that God is not constrained to a temple or other building and that such an attitude reveals a belief that we can confine God to a place where we can occasionally go to visit Him, say some prayers, and hope He will stay while we go out and live our life without Him. On the journey several people had the opportunity to follow Jesus, but gave a variety of excuses, including “. . . first let me say farewell to my family at home.” As Catholics we believe our life is from God and in God. We cannot confine God to a place or a religious practice. And, if we are a true disciple of Jesus, we can put no conditions on following and imitating Jesus.

Option 2

“No one who sets a hand to the plow and looks to what was left behind is fit for the kingdom of God.”

When Elijah calls to Elisha, he hesitated, “Let me kiss my father and mother goodbye.” Elijah does not prevent him. Then Elisha kills the team of oxen he was driving, uses the wood of the plow to build a fire to burn their flesh and distributes it to the people and follows Elijah. He

detaches himself from everything he previously depended on. Paul tells us, “For freedom Christ set us free.” Christ teaches us to be free from attachment to things of this world. This freedom is not for selfish pursuits, but “to serve one another in love.” Jesus calls us to follow him, but we sometimes hesitate. If we start to follow Jesus but let other attachments distract us, we will never be free to discern God’s will for us and respond in freedom to God for all that he has given to us. What are the attachments in our life that keep us from the true freedom that allows us to follow Christ, without hesitation? Make a list. Use the back of the page and more sheets, if necessary.