

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 4, 2019

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.

August 11, 2019
Nineteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time
Luke 12:32-48

Option 1

“Of those who have much, much is expected”

Johnny Manziel had a 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 field, Manziel was the 22nd pick in 2014 NFL Draft by the Browns. 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. 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 15, 2019
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 18, 2019
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 neighbors 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 Jesus was aware that if we 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.

August 25, 2019
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 uniforms and best

equipment. Their coaches were the best money could buy. The opposing team from a high school in a poor neighborhood came on the field wearing old and worn pads, scarred helmets and jerseys that had been handed down for years. Nothing matched. The coaches were volunteers. Who do you think won the game? Who would you cheer 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 answered that 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 Jesus to call us to sit in the God’s Kingdom, first or last?