

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

February 3, 2019
Fourth Sunday in Ordinary Time
Luke 4:21-30

Option 1

And Jesus said, “Amen, I say to you, no prophet is accepted in his own native place.”

If we become a star athlete or acquire great wealth, our high school or home town may honor us as “Person of the Year” or dedicate a plaque to us. But if we challenge people to do great things, there may be no plaque for us. Jesus entered the synagogue in his home town of Nazareth and read a passage from Isaiah that prophesied the coming of the Messiah and then He said it had been fulfilled in their midst. The people of Nazareth knew Jesus well. He grew up and lived among them. He was one of them. He was like them. He had not yet done anything to indicate that He was the Messiah. But the people knew the Messiah would do great things. If Jesus was the Messiah, there was no reason why they, too, could not do great things. If Jesus could not prove to them that He was the Messiah, there would be no pressure on them to be better than they wanted to be. Jesus knew that familiarity breeds doubt. He challenged the people of Nazareth to accept Him despite their doubt - to have faith in Him. Do we sometimes doubt Jesus? Do we accept Him as Messiah despite our doubt? Do we have faith in Him?

Option 2

“Isn’t this the son of Joseph?”

In his home town of Nazareth Jesus read a passage from Isaiah that prophesied the coming of the Messiah. He closed the scroll and claimed it had been fulfilled in their hearing. They “all spoke highly of him and were amazed at the gracious words that came from his mouth.” But they instinctively realized that if Jesus, the son of Mary and Joseph, the carpenter, was truly the Messiah, he was destined to do great things. And, if he did great things he might challenge them to do great things. He had grown up among them and was like them. They became fearful and agitated and tried to throw him off of a high cliff at the top of the craggy hill where Nazareth is located. From our youth we have learned about Jesus through the revealed Word of God. We have come to know him as the Messiah who did great things and who saved us by his death and resurrection. We know he expects us to be all that God created us to be. How do we respond? Do we try to throw Jesus over a high cliff? Or do we try to imitate Jesus and do great things?

February 10, 2019
Fifth Sunday in Ordinary Time
Luke 5:1-11

Option 1

Simon was not only a fisherman, he was engaged in the business of fishing. He and his brother Andrew were partners with James and John, sons of Zebedee. Fish were an important source of protein for the people of the time of Jesus. The business of catching and selling fish involved hard work, but was profitable. A man in the business of fishing would probably not take advice from a carpenter about where to fish, especially after a whole night without a catch. But Simon the fisherman did not do what the man from Nazareth told him because he was a carpenter; he did it because of what he had heard what Jesus said and saw what he had done. After hauling a large catch of fish Simon the fisherman would continue to follow Jesus; to learn from him; to grow in his faith in Jesus as the Messiah. He would eventually be transformed into Peter, the Fisher of Men. He lived his life and accepted his death because of his faith in Jesus. He is a model for everyone who claims to believe in Jesus.

Option 2

**“Master, we have worked hard all night and have caught nothing,
but at your command I will lower the nets!”**

Fishing is a difficult and dangerous way to make a living. The profits sometimes do not justify the perspiration and the peril. And it is highly unlikely that a man who has spent his life fishing on a small, pear shaped sea in Galilee would take the advice of a carpenter about where and when to lower his nets. That is why Simon’s response to Jesus is such a strong statement of faith. When Simon Peter realized that Jesus was calling him to be his disciple he fell to his knees and said, “Depart from me, Lord, for I am a sinful man.” When Isaiah heard the Lord he proclaimed his unworthiness. The Lord asked, “Whom shall I send?” Isaiah responded, “Here I am Lord, send me!” When Cardinal Karol Wojtyla stepped onto the balcony as Pope John Paul II, he said, “Do not be afraid!” Isaiah, Simon Peter and John Paul II are teaching us that being a disciple, a follower of Jesus Christ, is not about being *worthy*. It is about being *willing*. If we wait until we are worthy, we will never begin. If we are willing, we have already begun to follow Jesus.

February 17, 2019
Sixth Sunday in Ordinary Time
Luke 6:17, 20-26

Option 1

“And raising his eyes toward his disciples, he said: Blessed . . .”

Imagine that people from Jerusalem, other parts of Judea and from towns near the Mediterranean Sea are gathered on the slopes of the hills rising out of the northwest shore of the Sea of Galilee. They heard about Jesus and came to listen to him. Imagine there was a stenographer sitting next to Jesus writing down everything he said. Well, there were people gathered on the hillside, but there was no one writing down everything Jesus said. The people on the hillside and in other

places, on other occasions, heard the same thing and more from Jesus. They came to hear him because they had also heard that his life matched his message. He did not teach others to do what he was not doing himself. That made him different from the High Priest, Sadducees, Pharisees, and scribes. There was no newspapers, radio, television, videos or social media to spread the teaching of Jesus. People went home and shared what they heard with their family and village. When we imitating Jesus, people may ask why we do that. Then we can tell them about Jesus.

Option 2

“Blessed are you . . .”

The passive tone of the beatitudes in the Sermon on the Mount in St. Matthew's Gospel must be read in concert with the mandate to act in St. Luke's version of the same event in his Sermon on the Plain. Rev. Abuna Elias Chacour is a Melkite Catholic priest who was born in Biram in Gallilee (northern part of Israel). His family and fellow villagers were forced off of their land and out of their homes by the Israelis. He speaks Aramaic, the language that Jesus spoke. He translates the Beatitudes in a more pro-active way. He proposes that Jesus meant: "*You who are poor - who seek justice - peacemakers - get up, go ahead, do something, about your poverty - justice - peace - and you will be blessed.*" Complacency and timidity about our condition in life and our world is not a blessing. But blessed are those who act to benefit themselves and others. So let us *get up, go ahead, do something* to make life better for ourselves and others.

February 24, 2019

Seventh Sunday in Ordinary Time

Luke 6:27-38

Option 1

“Do to others as you would have them do to you.”

By today's standards the people who followed and listened to Jesus were poor and worked very hard to provide a meager existence for themselves and their family. They had no hope of rising above their station or achieving an easier life. They knew the Ten Commandments (Decalogue) and the command God gave Moses to Love God with our whole heart, mind, soul and strength; and to love our neighbor as ourselves (Great Commandment). But they lived under the brutal oppression of the Romans and the severe teaching and demands of the Jewish leaders of their day that seemed to rule by “an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.” When Jesus told them “love your enemies, do good to those who hate you” and to “Do to others as you would have them do to you” he was reminding them of the Decalogue and the Great Commandment. Despite more than two thousand years of Christianity, much of our world is still about “an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.” Jesus is reminding for us to “Do to others as you would have them do to you.”

Option 2

“For if you love those who love you, what credit is that to you?”

Is there someone your really don't like? Or is there someone you feel you hate. Hopefully you have come to realize that such feelings about people are because of something we believe they did to us, or something they should have done for us, but didn't. We may waste a lot of time thinking about how we will retaliate. Or we may actually retaliate in some way. But that may lead to serious physical or legal consequences. Ultimately, the time we spend with feelings of dislike or hatred, or the actions we take, do more harm to us than to the other person. That is why Jesus taught his disciples, and through them, taught us, to “love your enemies and do good to them.” Jesus knew there would be people that, for some reason or another, we would not like. Jesus was critical of the Chief Priest, Sadducees, Pharisees and the scribes. He loved them enough to challenge them to change. That's the kind of love he wants us to have for everyone, including our enemies. It is not easy, but that is what Jesus did and what he challenges us to do.