

# *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 1, 2018

Thirteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time

Mark 5:21-43

### Option 1

**“Do not be afraid; just have faith.”**

St. Mark tells us of two people who had great faith in Jesus and the consequences of their faith. He starts with Jarius, the synagogue official, who pleads with Jesus to heal his daughter who is dying? Before revealing the end of the story of Jarius, St. Mark tells of the woman who spent much of her life with a painful and debilitating condition of hemorrhages. She believed she would be healed if she just touched the hem of Jesus' garment. She succeeds and is healed. Jesus tells her “Daughter, your faith has saved you. Go in peace and be cured of your affliction.” St. Mark then returns to Jarius who is told not to bother Jesus further because his daughter has died. Jesus tells him “Do not be afraid; just have faith.” He has faith and his daughter is saved by his faith. Jarius and the woman with hemorrhages compel us to examine the quality and strength of our faith. Jesus is telling us, “Do not be afraid, just have faith.” Have we heard Jesus say, “Your faith has saved you. Go in peace”?

### Option 2

**“If I but touch his cloths I will be cured.”**

Many of us learned a valuable lesson in trust and faith from our parents or grandparents with a very simple demonstration. They told us to stand up straight in front of them with our arms stretched out and instructed us to fall back without bending our knees. It may have taken several attempts before we finally stayed straight, fell back and they caught us. They told us we could always trust them. The disciples of Jesus witnessed many wonders before they had faith in him. Mark tells us of a woman who heard about Jesus and believed that he would cure her if she just touched his clothes. She managed to touch his garment and was cured. But Jesus told her “Your faith has saved you.” He told the same thing to others who believed in him and were cured of illness and evil in their lives. When we believe in the goodness and mercy of our loving God and His desire that we use all He has given us to the best of our ability for ourselves and for others, by imitating Jesus, we can be confident that He is saying to us “Your faith has saved you.”

**July 8, 2018**  
**Fourteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time**  
**Mark 6:1-6**

**Option 1**

**“They said, ‘Where did this man get all this? What kind of wisdom has been given him?’”**

When a person demonstrates unusual intelligence or wisdom, we ask, “Where did they get all that?” And we may be wondering, “Why them and not me?” We tend to ignore the possibility that such people are not only gifted with above average intellect, but that they have an open mind and heart to the truth of the realities they observe and recognize new possibilities and the need to change how we think and live. Knowledge is the intellectual ability to understand the world in which we live. Wisdom is the choice to discern the truth and implications of that knowledge. Knowledge is knowing how to build an atomic bomb. Wisdom is understanding why it should not be used. It is the wisdom of Jesus, not his intelligence, that amazed the people of the small village of Nazareth. Jesus observed the world in which he lived and realized the need for change in the way we treat one another and our world. That is wisdom. Jesus was not given wisdom. He chose to be wise. Jesus calls us to be wise. What do we choose?

**Option 2**

**“A prophet is not without honor except in his native place  
and among his own kin and in his own house.”**

Many people want to be a prophet in our current age, particularly when the Power Ball and Mega Millions lotteries rise to hundreds of millions of dollars. However, few of us would have wanted to be prophets for the Chosen People before the time of Christ, or like John the Baptist and Jesus. Such prophets observed the silly, senseless, stupid and sinful things in their time, and they called for CHANGE. The people of their time did not like CHANGE and they rejected the prophet who called for CHANGE. We do not like CHANGE or the person who calls us to CHANGE. When we were baptized we were anointed “priest, *prophet* and king.” We have the responsibility to observe the silly, senseless, stupid and sinful things in our time, and call for CHANGE. It is part of our obligation as disciples and imitators of Jesus. And we can expect to be treated like Jesus, John the Baptist, and the prophets before them, when we CHANGE and call others to CHANGE. But Jesus assured us, “A prophet is not without honor . . .” in his eyes.

**July 15, 2018**  
**Fifteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time**  
**Mark 6:7-13**

**Option 1**

**“Whatever place does not welcome you or listen to you,  
leave there and shake the dust off your feet in testimony against them.”**

We all want to be loved and affirmed, or at least to be like and accepted. We definitely do not want to be ignored and rejected. We will sometimes rationalize reality or live a lie to get what we want. That can lead to self-deception and co-dependency in our relationship with others, and inordinate attachment to things. Jesus knew he was sending his disciples to preach the Good News to people who would criticize, ridicule, reject and attack them because the Good News

made people aware of their need to change. Jesus knew that our human nature resist change and rejects the person who call us to change. He cautioned his disciples not to diminish the truth or soften the Good News in order to be liked and accepted by those who refused to change. He taught them that it was better not to be loved, than to be loved for the wrong reason. The Good News calls us to change; to love Jesus for the right reason; to be loved for the right reason. How do we treat the person who brings us the Good News and calls us to change?

### **Option 2**

**“He instructed them to take nothing for the journey but a walking stick - no food, no sack, no money in their belts.”**

*Meism* is a spiritual and moral disease that most people have, but are unaware. The primary symptoms of *Meism* are the attitude that *The one who dies with the most things wins!* and the constant repetition of the word *Mine!* Jesus passed on to his disciples the responsibility to spread his message and continue his work without *a walking stick - no food, no sack, no money in their belts*. They went into the world armed only with the truth and beauty of the Good News: *Love your God with your whole heart, soul, mind and strength; and love your neighbor as yourself*. Jesus knew that is all that is *needed* to be his true disciple. Are we prepared and willing to be stewards of all that God has given to us to spread the message and continue the work of Jesus? A wise sage once noted that: *Our success and greatness in life depend not so much on what he have, but on what we can do without*. What are we prepared to do without to imitate Jesus?

**July 22, 2018**

**Sixteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time**

**Mark 6:30-34**

### **Option 1**

**“His heart was moved with pity for them, for they were like sheep without a shepherd.”**

Jesus was well acquainted with sheep. Then, as now, herds of sheep were everywhere. In countries like Israel and Jordan sheep have the right of way because they have roamed the land for centuries before modern transportation. But without a shepherd to lead and protect them sheep scatter, may not be able to find food and water, and are defenseless against predators. Jesus saw that the Jewish people of his day were not being lead and protected by their religious leaders. They were scattering and searching for spiritual food and hope, and were under attack by people and leaders of other cultures who tempted them to abandon their God. Jesus saw them like sheep without a shepherd. He started to teach them by word and example. He freed them from the burden of excessive sanitary rules and rituals, and reminded them of what God told them through Moses: “Love your God and love your neighbor as yourself.” It is not complicated but it is not easy. Yet, many believed and followed Jesus. Do we believe and follow Jesus?

### **Option 2**

**“The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want.”**

Advertisers in all modern media, print and electronic, use images and words, no matter how inappropriate or deceptive, to entice us to *want* everything. It is amazing how many of us are enticed to buy the newest fashion in clothes, no matter how atrocious; the most expensive car rather than a cheaper model of equal quality; useless toys and gadgets; and so much more,

whether we need it or not. But we are privileged to be disciples of Jesus. He calls us to be good stewards who recognize the difference between what we *want* and what we *need*, and to share with others what we do not *need*. If we wait to give to God, by giving to others, until we have all we *want*, we will never give to God. We will always *want* something else. And we will never know the truth and joy of the words of Psalm 23: *The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want*. And that would be sad.

**July 28, 2018**  
**Seventeenth Sunday in Ordinary Time**  
**John 6:1-15**

**Option 1**

**“Since Jesus knew that they were going to come and carry him off  
to make him king, he withdrew again to the mountain alone.”**

Creflo Dollar [his real name] is a “prosperity preacher” at his Atlanta-area based church. He is asking people to give him \$65,000,000 to buy a Gulfstream G650 jet. And the only “miracle” preacher Dollar seems to perform is to convince people to give him \$65,000,000 to buy a jet. Contrast that with the young boy who gave Jesus his basket of fish, and did not keep any for himself; and Jesus, who blessed it and, without keeping any for himself, gave it to the disciples to give to the people who had not brought provisions when they went to hear Jesus. Then, when the crowd had their fill, and the disciples collected twelve basket full of fish and bread, Jesus did not tell the disciples to sell the leftovers so he could buy the best horse and most comfortable saddle. He did not try to take advantage of the people for profit or power. He withdrew to the mountain to be alone. He gave the people the opportunity to learn that acts of generosity, like that of the young boy and himself, are a challenge to us to choose to be generous to others.

**Option 2**

**“There is a little boy here who has five barley loaves and two fish,  
but what good are those for so many.”**

As a result of their nomadic heritage, Semites [descendants of Shem, son of Noah], both Jews and Arabs, had a strong ethic of sharing food, drink and shelter with others, including strangers, especially travelers. When they went to hear Jesus some brought provisions for the day. But to avoid sharing with those who had brought none, they keep them hidden under their robes until they were alone. John tells of the little boy with a basket of loaves and fish, probably food his mother sent him to buy for family dinner. He freely gives it to Jesus, keeping none for himself. Jesus blessed it and gave it away, keeping none for Himself. Did the people observe these two acts of generosity? Did they choose to be generous by sharing with others what they had hidden? In the context of the gift of our free will, our ability to choose to be generous, which is a greater miracle for Jesus, multiplying loaves and fishes, or multiplying generous hearts?