

# 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

**March 3, 2019**  
**8<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time**  
**Luke 6:39-45**

### **Option 1**

**“No disciple is superior to the teacher; but when fully trained, every disciple will be like his teacher.”**

A good teacher teaches a student WHAT to learn. A great teacher teaches a student HOW to learn. A good teacher uses words. A great teacher is an example. The goal of a good teacher is that the student not fail. The goal of a great teacher is not to fail the student. Students try to please a good teacher. Students are concerned about disappointing a great teacher. Good students learn all they can from a good teacher. Great students learn to become the teacher. A disciple is one who follows another to learn. The disciples of Jesus were his students. An apostle is sent. Jesus was preparing his students for the time when he would no longer be with them and he would send them to be like him in the world. He knew it would be difficult for them. They could not be like the blind leading the blind. They had to teach others all that he taught them. They had to live like he lived. They had to risk all that he risked. They did. They have taught us. Have we been good students? Have we become like the teacher?

### **Option 2**

**“A good tree does not bear rotten fruit, nor does a rotten tree bear good fruit.”**

In the time of Jesus large cities like Jerusalem and some smaller towns had markets where people could go to vendors who brought their produce, fish and meats to a stall to be sold. Typically, each stall sold one item, such as fruits, vegetables, nuts, grains, spices, fish, meat etc. Outside of the large cities and towns people cultivated the items they wanted to eat on trees, bushes, stalks. When they were ready to eat, they picked what they wanted for that meal. So the people who followed and listened to Jesus were well aware of the importance of removing whatever did not produce good food and replace it with something that bears “good fruit.” The people who heard Jesus had no doubt about what he meant. And when he said, “A good person out of the store of goodness in his heart produces good, but an evil person out of a store of evil produces evil; for from the fullness of the heart the mouth speaks” they knew he was challenging them to choose good, not evil; to do right, not wrong; that God would judge them by what they produced.

**March 10, 2019**  
**First Sunday of Lent**  
**Luke 4:1-13**

**Option 1**

***“You shall not put the Lord, your God, to the test.”***

The story of the temptation of Jesus raises several questions. Why did the Spirit lead Jesus into the desert to be tempted by the devil? Why did the devil tempt Jesus to turn stones into bread and offer Him all the kingdoms of the world? Why take Jesus to the parapet of the temple in Jerusalem and tell Him to throw himself down so the angels could protect him from harm? Well, there are an endless supply of stones in the Holy Land. Jesus could have sold bread and become very rich. With great wealth and power over all of the kingdoms of the earth, Jesus could control the lives of everyone. If people saw Him jump off the parapet of the temple and land safely on the ground, they would have been so amazed He would control their mind and spirit. Jesus not only resisted the temptations of the devil, He taught us that we will not gain the Kingdom of God by unearned wealth, undeserved power, or trickery. We get to heaven by being all that God created us to be. Do we want to get to heaven?

**Option 2**

***“When the devil had finished every temptation, he departed from him for a time.”***

Now there's a scary thought. Jesus, the Word made Flesh, Son of God and Son of Mary, is tempted by the devil - not just once, but again and again. How was Jesus really tempted? *Turn stones into bread.* That is a temptation to acquire material security and financial wealth. The Holy Land is full of stones. Turning stones into bread would have made Jesus very wealthy. *All the kingdoms in the world . . . will be yours.* That is a temptation to use wealth to gain power over others. Tyrants, both large and small, national and in families, use wealth to control others. Many people live in poverty and fear of a tyrant who has political and military power. Some people spend their lives catering to the whims of the person who controls a family's fortune. *Throw yourself down and the angels will protect you.* This is the most sinister temptation of all. To do something that will amaze people so you can gain control over their minds and hearts and souls. In various ways we constantly face these same temptations in our lives. How do we deal with them?

**March 17, 2019**  
**Second Sunday of Lent**  
**Luke 9:28b-36**

**Option 1**

***“This is my chosen Son; listen to him.”***

Mount Tabor is a craggy, steep, cone-shaped mountain south-east of Nazareth. There is a church on top of the mountain that commemorates the Transfiguration with chapels full of beautiful paintings, murals and mosaics depicting the event; Jesus with the three disciples, Jesus with Moses and Elijah; and of course, Jesus in dazzlingly white clothes. The art work is based on the record of the Transfiguration in the Gospels, but is ultimately the product of the imagination of the artist. The real meaning of the Transfiguration, like all Revelation in the Old and New

Testaments, is God's love for His creation and His hope that we will be aware of His love for us. Moses conveyed God's commandment that we love God with our whole heart, mind, soul and strength; and love our neighbor as ourselves. Elijah conveyed God's promise that he would send a Messiah. Jesus revealed himself as our Savior and Lord, our Messiah. Do we believe that?

### **Option 2**

**“Master, it is good that we are here. Let us make three tents,  
One for you, one for Moses and one for Elijah.”**

The Transfiguration occurred just after Jesus predicted his suffering and death and explained the conditions of discipleship. When Peter observed Jesus change in appearance and conversing with Moses, the Great Law Giver, and Elijah, the Great Prophet, he was at first frightened, but then felt privileged and secure. He proposed to make three tents or dwellings. It is possible Peter wanted to keep Jesus safe. He may have wanted to avoid the risk of discipleship. We sometimes want to build a tent and stay in our comfort zone, rather than imitate Jesus and risk the consequences of being a disciple of Jesus. That is particularly true when we feel called to be good stewards of God's world by fully sharing of our time, abilities and resources. In the end, the Father leaves us no choice, **“This is my chosen Son; listen to him.**

**March 24, 2019**

**Third Sunday of Lent**

**Luke 13:1-9**

### **Option 1**

**“But I tell you, if you do not repent, you will all perish as they did!”**

Jesus was asked if the Galileans were sinners because they were slaughtered by Roman soldiers as they sacrificed in the temple. Jesus knew people believed a violent or tragic death was a sign of God's punishment for a sinful life. He mentions the incident of the people killed by the collapse of the Tower of Siloam and asks if they were greater sinners than others who lived in Jerusalem? Jesus then tells the parable of the landowner who ordered his gardener to cut down a non-producing fig tree. The gardener pleads to give it another chance. Jesus is teaching the people, and us, that the manner of our death is not necessarily an indication of the good or evil we have done in our life, and our failure to be all God created us to be does not need to be permanent. We can always choose to use all of God's gifts to us to the best of our ability. In this Jubilee Year of Mercy we should reflect on the God who created us and who does not condemn us, we condemn ourselves. But our Merciful God wants to forgive us, if we ask.

### **Option 2**

**“For three years I have come in search of fruit on this fig tree but have found none. So cut it down! Why should it exhaust the soil?”**

Jesus tells of a gardener who pleads to save a fig tree so he can cultivate it and hope to make it productive. In chapters one and two of Genesis God reveals that He created man and woman and gave them dominion over His *Garden* - all creation. Bishop Robert Morneau poignantly describes how God made us stewards of His garden, and the *many gardens* he has given to us: the *gardens* of our faith, our body, our family, our mind, our artistic ability, our many abilities and, most importantly, our ability to reason and our free will. All of the *gardens* belong to God.

“How are we caring for His *gardens*? Are we being good stewards? Have we cultivated them or let them go fallow. Are they as productive as God intended? If not, it is not too late. The first step is to identify and accept responsibility for the *gardens* that God has entrusted to our care. Do not be afraid. We have Jesus as our helper in the *gardens*.

**March 31, 2019**  
**Fourth Sunday of Lent**  
**Luke 15:1-3, 11-32**

**Option 1**

**“The younger son said to his father,**

**‘Father give me the share of your estate that should come to me.’”**

A Jewish friend claims that we can know the parable of *The Prodigal Son* is a story because no Jewish father in the time of Jesus would divide his property before he died and give half to his spendthrift youngest son. My Jewish friend highlights an important point - Jesus is telling a story. Jesus frequently used parables to teach a truth. A parable is a story. This story teaches us the truth that love is unconditional. It is tempting to get caught up in the details about the ingratitude and selfishness of the youngest son who thought he could buy happiness and friends; the love of a father for a child who has rejected him and all his values; and a son who is too self absorbed and angry to share his father’s joy at the return of his younger brother. Jesus told the story to teach the Pharisees and scribes, and us, that there is a little bit of the father and his sons in all of us. We sometimes love unconditionally; we are sometimes ungrateful and selfish; we are sometimes too angry to share others’ joys. What would others say about us?

**Option 2**

**“My son, you are here with me always. Everything I have is yours.”**

Jesus tells the story of the man with two sons, one who leaves his father and squanders his possessions. Despite of his son’s ingratitude, the father longs for his son’s return. The ungrateful son sinks so low he realizes his mistake and chooses to return to his father to beg forgiveness. The other son is angered by his father’s act of love and compassion for the son who abandoned and hurt him. In a similar story in the Talmud an ungrateful son is too ashamed to take the first step to return to his father. His father sends him a note, “Son, come back as far as you can, and I will come the rest of the way!” God has given us all that we have, all that we are and all that we ever will be. Are we sometimes ungrateful for all that God has given to us? Have we failed to use it as God intended? Have we abandoned God’s plan for us? Probably!!!! But He longs for our return. If we take the first step, He comes the rest of the way to us. Our God is an Awesome God.