

# 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(s) who produces the bulletin.***

## Bulletin Bites

November 3, 2019

Thirty-First Sunday in Ordinary Time

Luke, 19:1-10

### Option 1

**“He has gone to stay at the house of a sinner.”**

Are there any like Zacchaeus among us? Can any of us say “I shall give HALF of my possessions to the poor, and if I have defrauded anyone I will repay them four times over.” There are some. But we live in a world in which “grabbing the brass ring” has, for many, turned into grabbing for all the money we can get, regardless of the means we use or harm we do to others. Yet there are people who “Do not do to others what you do not want others to do to you” [Rabbi Hillel]; who “Do unto others as you would have them do unto you” [Jesus]. There are people who take responsibility for themselves and for others dependent on them; who share with people in need. Many people in the world have very little; some lack the basic necessities of life. They understand the need to share. St. Theresa of Calcutta tells of giving a cup of rice to the mother of a desperately poor family in the slums of India. The woman got a container, divide the rice in two and sent half to the family next to her. When asked why she did that she said, “They are hungry too.” Are we aware of the hungry among us? Do we share what we have with them?

### Option 2

**“Behold, half of my possessions, Lord, I shall give to the poor,  
and if I have extorted anything from anyone I shall repay it four times.”**

*Everyone willing to join with Zacchaeus, raise your hand.* Only a man who is aware that everything we have comes from God and that God wants us to use it for ourselves and others, and who has been a good steward, would give half of his possessions to the poor. Only a man who had lived honorably in the sight of God can declare that he will return four times over whatever he had unjustly taken from another. Jesus was willing to enter the house of Zacchaeus, over the objection of his friends and other, because He had entered the heart of Zacchaeus and was able to declare, “Today salvation has come to this house because this man, too, is a descendant of Abraham.” Are we ready for Jesus to stay at our home and enter into our heart? Have we been a good stewards of all God has given to us and lived honorably in God’s sight? Will Jesus say “salvation has come to this house” when he visits our home?

**November 10, 2019**  
**Thirty-Second Sunday in Ordinary Time**  
**Luke 20:27-38**

**Option 1**

***“He is not God of the dead, but of the living.”***

The best teachers provide information and teach us to ask the right questions. Facts should lead to the questions, “Who, what, why, when, how and why not?” In today’s gospel Jesus is confronted by a group of Sadducees who did not believe in eternal life. They use a common Jewish tactic by positing facts and posing a question intended to trap Jesus. He responds with another Jewish custom, positing another possibility. He responds with a rebuke to the Sadducees and a clear statement about eternal life. For those who understand and live the command that God gave to the Israelites, “Love God with our whole heart, soul, mind and strength, and your neighbor as yourself” there will be life after our earthly sojourn “for those who are deemed worthy to attain to the coming age.” The Sadducees understood that Jesus meant they would not be “deemed worthy” if they failed to love God and their neighbor as themselves. Do we understand that? Will we be deemed worthy?

**Option 2**

**“Those who are deemed worthy to attain the coming age  
and to the resurrection of the dead will not marry in the coming age.”**

The Chief of the tribe heard that winter would be severe. He sent his braves to gather wood. Then he called the Weather Bureau and was told that severe winter weather was coming. So he sent the braves out to gather more wood. After several calls the Chief asked why they kept predicting a severe winter. They said, “Because the Indians are gathering wood like crazy.” The Weather Bureau caused the Indians to gather wood and then misinterpreted their actions. Thus are the consequences of misinterpreting the meaning of tradition. The Sadducees present Jesus with a hypothesis about a woman who married seven brothers in obedience to the law of Moses that if a man die, leaving a wife and no children, his brother must marry her. That command was intended for the preservation of the Israelites and the welfare of widows. The Sadducees tried to use tradition to try to trick Jesus. He deprived them of their victory. We are heirs and stewards of the great tradition of our Catholic faith. Our God is a God of the living, not of the dead.

**November 17, 2019**  
**Thirty-third Sunday of Ordinary Time**  
**Luke 21:15-19**

**Option 1**

**“All that you see here - the days will come  
when there will not be left one stone up another. ”**

Jesus grew up in the small village of Nazareth on top of a craggy mountain in the northern part of Israel. Like the vast majority of the people of his day he lived in a small house with a lower space where animals were brought in at night and a raised portion at the rear where the family lived, stored their meager possessions and slept on mats. There was no middle class. It is recorded that Jesus traveled several times to the grand and elaborately furnished Temple in the walled city of Jerusalem. He saw the excesses of wealth and power and he realized they were

not what God desired to honor him. He taught us that people who love God, and who love and are responsible for themselves and others, are the true Temples that give honor to their God who created them. The Temple and the City of Jerusalem would be destroyed by Titus and natural disasters. But the disciples of Jesus who try to imitate him are Temples of the Holy Spirit that no natural disaster or powerful army can destroy. Are we such a temple?

### **Option 2**

**“See that you not be deceived . . .**

**for many will come in my name saying ‘I am he.’ Do not follow them”**

As a result of the conquest of Jerusalem by Titus in 71 AD, earthquakes, and other wars, part of the Western (Wailing) Wall of the Temple Mount and a section of the wall on the East side of the city are all that remain partially intact. But Jesus was not impressed with the physical size and adornments of the Temple and he did not expect it to last. He is the New Temple, and as a result of our Baptism, we are Temples of the Holy Spirit. As a consequence of our Baptism we are responsible for having a mature faith appropriate to our age and a prayer life that is more about what we are willing to hear from God than what we say to God. Like the City of Jerusalem, we will be attacked. If we have been good stewards and caretakers of our faith we will be strong enough to endure attacks, questions, ridicule, rejection and even persecution by people who feel threatened by our beliefs and values. Our Temple will not be destroyed. We will live forever.

**November 24, 2019**

**Solemnity of Christ the King**

**Luke 23:35-43**

### **Option 1**

***“Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom.”***

In Mel Brooks classic movie *History of the World Part I* he portrays several characters including King Louis of France who engages in ridiculous excess and says, “It’s good to be the king.” The segment of that movie is a parody of the romantic notion about ancient and medieval monarchs who were actually abusive and cruel tyrants. Christ was not such a king. When the Jews were under regular attack by the kings of other nations they asked God for a king to provide protection for them. Saul was the first but he faltered under the weight of the task. David was a king of Judah who, despite his faults, was revered for uniting the Israelites and providing them with equal protection against aggressors and equal access to resources. The role of a true king is not to lord it over people and oppress them, but to be a true steward of all that God has given to us and to provide equal protection and resources to all. In other words, to love God and to love our neighbor as ourselves. That is why we celebrate Jesus as King.

### **Option 2**

***“Amen, I say to you. This day you will be with me in paradise.”***

We should all long to hear Jesus speak those words to us. And, if we are good stewards and caretakers of all of the gifts God has given to us (all that we are and have and ever will be), we will one day hear those words. With Christ as our King, let us review some simple truths about being his steward. Catholic stewards accept responsibility for God’s creation to preserve it and make it productive for oneself and for others; have a mature and constantly growing faith and a prayer life that is open to God’s will; accept responsibility for the welfare and well being of their

parish faith community; joyfully give and share the gifts our culture holds most dear - our time and treasure; do not give until it hurts, but joyfully give until it helps. A good Catholic Steward is not a title or award. It is the way we imitate Jesus Christ our King, who will one day say, "Good and faithful steward, come and enter into my kingdom."

**December 1, 2019**  
**First Sunday of Advent**  
**Matthew 24:37-44**

**Option 1**

**"So too, you also must be prepared, for at the hour you do not expect,  
the Son of Man will come."**

Women do not carry large purses with at least one every item they or their children may possibly need because they like carrying heavy objects or exercising their biceps. They learn from experience that it is better to have something and not need it, than to need something and not have it. Large planes and space ships have redundant mechanical and electrical systems in the event one fails. This reflects the Boy Scouts' motto: "Be prepared!" Jesus understood that. He taught his followers, and us, to "Be prepared!" But for what? The simple answers are, "Just about anything" or "Whatever life brings us." Jesus did not know what specifically each of us would face, but he knew that if we loved God with our whole heart, mind, soul and strength, and loved our neighbor as ourselves we would be ready to use all of the talents, abilities and gifts God has given us, to the best of our ability, for our own benefit and the benefit of others. That is being prepared. Advent is a great time to get better prepared.

**Option 2**

**"Therefore, stay awake! For you do not know on which day your Lord will come."**

As we prepare to celebrate the birth of the Prince of Peace we might do well to contemplate that moment when we actually meet Jesus face to face. Imagine that you are told that Jesus will come to meet you. You are taken to a vast open field and told that Jesus will approach from a certain direction. You train your eyes on the horizon and wait. Then, in the far distance, you see a figure moving toward you. As the figure gets closer you begin to make out some features, such as height, gait, clothing, and more. As the person steadily walks closer to you can make out hair color and facial features. Suddenly, you realize that you know this person. It is someone you encountered who was in need of your assistance. There are two possibilities. You did help this person or you did not. Knowing it is Jesus who approaches, what do you hope you did? So we must always be prepared, for at an hour we do not expect, the Son of Man will come to us.