

# 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

October 7, 2018

Twenty-Seventh Sunday in Ordinary Time

Mark 10:2-16

### Option 1

**“Let the children come to me; do not prevent them,  
for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these.”**

When Jesus was asked a question about the morality and justice of human conduct He usually quoted the Law of Moses, or asked the questioner “What did Moses command you?” Jesus was aware that people who asked such questions knew the Law, but were testing His knowledge or looking for a loophole. When asked about divorce, Jesus asked “What did Moses say?” The questioner said that Moses permitted a husband to write a bill of divorce. Jesus acknowledged what Moses allowed because of their “hardness of heart,” but added, “What God has joined together, no one must separate.” St. Mark notes the disciples were preventing children from reaching Jesus. He told them: “Let them come to me; for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these.” Jesus is teaching us that marriage is a permanent union; we must have the heart of a child in our relationship; be open to children; love children; and learn from children.

### Option 2

**“Because of your hardness of hearts . . .”**

God created a wonderful world in which we human beings do not live in isolation. He gave us dominion over His world and intended that we choose to share its greatness with one another. He knew we would find such sharing and true equality difficult. God knew that some of us would acquire more than what we need, while others do without basic necessities. Henri Becque wisely observed that *“The defect with equality is that we only desire it with those we consider superior to ourselves.”* **God wanted us to choose true equality. He did not impose it on us. And he did not intend for anyone else to impose it on us.** Jesus taught us that we must accept the Kingdom of God like a child. As good stewards of God’s world we must accept God’s Kingdom like the children who approached Jesus without fear or expectations, other than to be accepted the way God created them. Does our “hardness of hearts” keep us from accepting God’s world, and His plan for us, “like a child.” Are we willing to soften our hearts?

**October 14, 2018**  
**Twenty-Eighth Sunday in Ordinary Time**  
**Mark 10:17-30**

**Option 1**

**“Teacher, all of these I have observed from my youth.”**

A father took his son camping and showed him the spot to clear for their tent. In the middle of the area there was a boulder. He told his dad he could not move the stone. His father asked, “Have you used all your strength?” The boy said he had. The father responded, “No, you haven’t, you have not asked for my help.” When faced with difficulties in life we often think we have done all we can, only to learn that there is something we failed to do. Such is the case of the young man who approached Jesus. He had kept all of the commandments that God gave Moses. He was a good man. But Jesus tells him to “Go, sell what you have, and give to the poor.” He was telling him, and us, that we cannot be attached to anything that keeps us from “loving our neighbor as ourselves.” The young man walked away sad. He could not use his many possessions for others. Jesus did not run after him and offer him an easier way. Are we doing all we should to gain eternal life? Do we sometimes find it difficult? Have we asked God for help?

**Option 2**

**“Go sell what you have, and give to the poor . . . the come follow me.”**

The rich young man who asked Jesus “Good Teacher, what *must* I do to inherit eternal life?” was probably a good person by the standards of his day. He claimed to have kept all the commandments from his youth. He was looking for the very *minimum* that he could get by with. In today’s jargon he was a “minimalist.” The young man had many possessions. When Jesus told him to sell what he had and give to the poor, he probably thought Jesus was being extreme and walked away sad. Jesus did not rush after him to offer him an easier way. Jesus actually told him the *minimum* that he, and we, *must* do to gain eternal life. When we recognize and accept that all we have, all we are, all we ever will be comes from God and belongs to God, at the very *minimum* we *must* acknowledge that we have *nothing* of our own to sell, but much of what belongs to God is to enjoy and share with others. As Catholics we do that by giving of our talents, abilities and gifts, including time and resources, to and through our parish community.

**October 21, 2018**  
**Twenty-Ninth Sunday in Ordinary Time**  
**Mark 10:35-45**

**Option 1**

**The rulers over the Gentiles lord it over them,  
and make their authority over them felt.  
But it shall not be so among you.**

The disciples of Jesus were not immune to temptations for power and prestige. Despite all that Jesus had taught them, they still thought He had come to establish an earthly kingdom that would free them of the oppression of their Roman conquerors and Jewish leaders, particularly Herod, who was named King by Caesar, but was not a Jew. They had visions of “Doing unto others what had been done to them.” Jesus asked if they could do what he knew he had to do. They had no clue what he meant, but said, “Yes, we can.” Jesus does not condemn them for their

human weakness of pride and envy, but he teaches them that their greatness will be determined, not by wealth, power and prestige, but by the way they serve others, by becoming a slave to all. That certainly is not what James and John, or any of the other disciples, had in mind. It would not be until Jesus rose from the dead and served them meals that they would begin to understand. We have their testimony in the Scripture that they understood. Do we understand?

### **Option 2**

**“You will drink of the cup that I will drink . . .  
but to sit at my right or my left is not mine to give.”**

Jesus cannot *give* us our place in eternity. We must *earn* it ourselves. Happily, Jesus gives us *the way* that we can earn it. “Whoever wishes to be *great* among you will be your *servant*; whoever wishes to be *first* among you will be the *slave* of all.” That probably sounds rather bizarre to many in our current culture of *Might Makes Right*, *Survival of the Fittest* and *The One Who Dies with the Most Things Wins*. However, those of us who *choose* to drink of the same cup as Jesus, and who share His baptism, *must* be *servant* of all. Like Jesus, we must serve without expectation of reward. We must serve and not expect to be served. We have no choice.

**October 28, 2018**

**Thirtieth Sunday in Ordinary Time**

**Mark: 10:46-52**

### **Option 1**

Jericho is a small town approximately twenty miles southeast of Jerusalem on the west side of the Jordan River just above where it enters the Dead Sea. It is an oasis in a barren land where travelers stop for respite from the sun in the shade of the many trees, drink water from the springs, and eat food from the fertile land that surrounds it. As Jesus and his disciples passed through Jericho Bartimaeus, a blind man, heard a crowd gathering and that Jesus was coming his way. He called out to Jesus and tells him “Master, I want to see.” Jesus recognizes the great faith of Bartimaeus, who regains his sight and follows Jesus. Bartimaeus suffered from physical blindness, but spiritually, he had great vision. He saw the greatness of Jesus that many with good eyesight did not see. Do we see the greatness of Jesus with our eyes and with our heart? When we feel we have lost sight of Jesus, do we have the faith to ask “Master, I want to see”?

### **Option 2**

**“Master, I want to see.” Jesus told him, “Your faith has saved you.”**

Jericho was a trading post for merchants crowded with people seeking to buy necessities and luxuries. As Jesus passed through, a crowd gathered around him. Despite the crowd, or possibly because of it, Bartimaeus, a blind man, believed that Jesus could help him. Jesus tells Bartimaeus. *Your faith has saved you.* That was great news for Bartimaeus. He regained his sight and then “followed Jesus on the way.” Jesus was teaching the crowd and us that faith can restore our sight, our vision of God. Through faith we can see God’s great love for us and all that he has given to us for ourselves and for others. No other institution has discerned, defined and articulated the mind of God for His creation as faithfully and consistently as the Roman Catholic Church. To be good stewards of our faith we must constantly grow in our understanding and appreciation of the beauty and truth in God’s creation in Revelation and in the tradition and teachings of the Catholic Church. Like Bartimaeus we must pray, “Master, I want to see.” If we are good stewards of our faith, our faith will save us.