

Lk 16:1-13; 1 Tm 2:1-8; Am 8:4-7 The Dishonest Steward

How do you comfort the dying? A hospice chaplain asked me to anoint a woman who was afraid to die. I brought a crucifix and I placed it on her neck. You can do that.

I put a scapular on her neck. And, I told her that the Virgin Mary at Fatima promised that whoever wore the scapular, at the moment of death, would be welcomed into heaven. You can do that.

I heard her confession, anointed her, and gave her Holy Communion. You can do that by inviting us priests.

But the most important thing happened when we prayed the Our Father: I held her hand. She didn't want to let go. And so, I stayed, holding her hand. You can do that.

Because in that moment it shows that you care, that you love her, that she means something to Jesus Christ. And after that...when she smiled...I knew she was no longer afraid of going to heaven.

The question is this: what are you doing with the gifts God has given you?

A steward was about to be fired for squandering his boss's property. He was not strong enough to dig and he was ashamed to beg. He had brilliant idea, so people would give him a place to stay:

He called those who owed his boss money or produce, and he reduced their debts. And when the boss found out, he praised him for acting prudently.

Why? Not because he was dishonest, but because he was wise.

Like Jesus said: *For the children of this world are more prudent in dealing with their own generation than are the children of light* (Lk 16:8).

In other words, we must be smart in our pursuit of the Kingdom of God, just like godless people are smart in pursuing their selfish ambitions.

We should imitate—not the steward's dishonesty, but his ingenuity.

You may say "I'm not a steward." But yes, you are. Each one of us is a steward of the gifts God has given us:

He has given us our hands to work. He has given us our brains to think. He has given us our hearts to love and care for, not only our loved ones, but also the outcasts and the needy.

That means we have to make a choice--between two demanding masters that are not compatible with each other. We must choose either God or worldly possessions.

But be careful. Because worldly possession, especially money, have a great seductive power.

We saw that in the first reading. The early Jewish people pretended to be so devout, but they really hated the Sabbath. Why? Because they couldn't sell and make money.

So instead of praying on the Sabbath, they spent the day scheming on how to make up for lost sales by cheating—by fixing the scales and adding worthless grains to what they sold.

But we cannot serve two masters. We will either hate one and love the other, or be devoted to one and despise the other. *You cannot serve both God and mammon* (Lk 6:13).

As God has commanded us from the days of old: *you shall love the Lord, your God, with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength* (Dt 6:5). And Jesus said that over and over again (Mk 12:30; Mt 22:37; Lk 10:27).

So as a wise and prudent manager, we must commit ourselves completely—
--with our whole heart, with our whole mind and with our whole being--to transform our lives by imitating the only master we serve—Jesus Christ.

What can we do? We have to grow in holiness. How? By sharing in God's plan of salvation.

We have to help God change the world through our prayers. Never underestimate the power of prayer.

St. Paul said so in the second reading. He said Christians should pray for *everyone, even for kings and for all in authority* (1 Tm 2:1-2a).

But in those days, the evil emperor Nero was killing Christians. Yet, God *wills everyone [should] be saved and come to knowledge of the truth* (1 Tm 4).

Therefore, we should pray for our leaders and our enemies so they will change their hearts and come to the knowledge that salvation is through the only master we serve—our Lord Jesus Christ.

And, we have to help God change the world by sharing our money and possessions with others.

Like Jesus said: *make friends for yourselves with dishonest wealth, so that when it fails, you will be welcomed into eternal dwellings* (Lk 16:9).

In other words, share the money and possessions you have with the needy so that when they fail us (at the point of death) we will have loved.

Because love...is the only thing that will fit through the “eye of the needle” (Lk 18:25) and take us into heaven.

So let us come to the table of that altar and receive the power. Eat His body and drink His blood so that His Holy Spirit comes to dwell--alive and powerful—inside of your heart, mind and soul.

Receive His wisdom—the knowledge of the truth, which is Jesus Christ.

And receive His most sacred heart—so you can use the gifts God has given you to love, and sacrifice, and forgive, and serve all those that God wants to love so much through Jesus Christ—alive and so powerful--inside of you.