

25th Sunday in Ordinary Time: Choosing to Be God's Faithful Stewards

Amos 8:4-7; Responsorial Psalm 113:1-2,2-6,7-8; 1 Timothy 2:1-8; Luke 16:1-13

Dear family and friends of the Co-Cathedral of St. Theresa,

How are you as stewards of God's gifts? This weekend's scripture readings bring to us some of the characteristics of a good steward.

One of the quotes from St. Theresa of Calcutta's book of collections of quotes entitled "In My Own Words" beautifully speaks about being God's steward. She said, "Open your hearts to the love God instills in them. God loves you tenderly. What he gives you is not to be kept under lock and key but to be shared. The more you save, the less you will be able to give. The less you have, the more you will know how to share. Let us ask God when it comes to asking God for something, to help us to be generous." She invites us to open ourselves to the tender love of God, and with hearts instilled by the tenderness of this love, we may not forget to share our material blessings with others; hence giving is the path of love. It is a fundamental attitude of being a steward.

The dishonest steward in our gospel is under judgment. He is now confronted with the consequences of his dishonesty. He is facing an imminent sad ending. It is no longer business as usual; thus, he has to find a way to secure his future. And in the first reading, the exploiters of the poor also face the consequence of their attitude and actions. God's words through Prophet Amos remind us that he sees and is angry at the uncaring attitude and unjust practices. He denounced the people who were bored of waiting for the end of the Sabbath to go back to their business as usual, like raising the price of grain and wheat; fixing the scales for cheating; controlling everything for profit at the expense of the poor (cf Amos 8:4-6).

The anger of God on these unjust practices warns us that this is the road towards destruction and has no future. The only hope is to follow the action of the dishonest steward. While he is not a model of conversion, for he did not repent and did it for a selfish motive, his act is a wise and prudent calculation. He utilizes the last hours of being in charge of his master's property by showing mercy to others, relieving their debts, and making friends with the poor to ensure his future. Our Lord Jesus commended his wise and prudent action. He uses the parable of the dishonest steward to deliver his message to his followers. If the child of the world knows how to secure his place in society, his followers should know how to invest and use their resources to merit their place in heaven. (cf Lk 16:8-9).

It implies that our Christian faith should influence our choices and actions as we use our time, talent, and treasure. Though our material blessings are temporary and may be gone one day, no matter how beautiful and significant they may be, they have inherent goodness if used wisely and prudently. Therefore, we choose whom to serve, for we cannot serve two masters. We choose to be good stewards because, in the end, we are accountable to someone higher than us and because we believe that our souls will last forever compared to all material investments in this world.

It all starts with being responsible for the small things. Jesus says: "The person who is trustworthy in small matters is also trustworthy in great ones, and the person who is dishonest in very small matters also dishonest in greater ones" (Lk 16:10). It is a wisdom practice by our patron St. Therese of the Child Jesus, that is, no matter how small and insignificant a circumstance is, "doing it with great love" leads us to do it with sincerity; hence, it is from a small matter that we do honestly helps build our character. The sooner we realize and accept this, then and only then we live our lives as not so much a matter of getting but giving, not a matter of owning but sharing for those who are poor and in need. It is a matter of choosing God over the mammon of the world.

God's stewards also commit to praying for all who are no longer giving and have lost sight of being good stewards, those dishonest stewards, exploiters of the poor, kings and princes, and lovers of money, and what have you. St. Paul writes to Timothy that is praying for them instead of being overcome by anger is "good, and pleasing in the sight of God our Savior, who desires all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the

truth" (1 Tim. 2:2-3). Then and only then will we gain what is ours and genuinely on the road to the dwelling place in heaven prepared by our Lord Jesus.

God bless you!

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