

25th Sunday per Annum - C
Amos 8:4-7;
I Timothy 2:1-8;
Luke 16:1-13
Little Flower - 9/22/19

My Brothers and Sisters,

The hymn “We Are Called,” #807 in *Gather*, is one of our most popular hymns. The refrain is based on Micah 6:8: “*What is good has been explained to you: this is what God asks of you, only this: to act justly, to love tenderly, and to walk humbly with your God.*” Scripture scholars argue that in this verse Micah summarizes the three previous prophets. The prophet Amos was the Old Testament prophet of justice. The message of today’s reading from Amos is that God will never forget injustice toward the needy and the poor! In most societies, including our own, there is a lot of injustice toward the needy and the poor.

All three readings last Sunday spoke of the mercy of God. My summary of the readings was “God pursues us in love, never giving up on us, never abandoning us.” Today’s Gospel, on the other hand, addresses human accountability. The steward was dismissed for squandering his master’s property. For us, this might mean wasting the gifts God has given us. In other words, God calls us to develop, use, and share all the gifts He has given us.

After the steward was dismissed, he magnified the injustice by trying to buy favor with those who owed his master by changing their bills. What makes this parable interesting, however, is that the master seemed to praise the servant for cheating him. The point Jesus was making with this parable is that bad people are often more committed to doing bad than good people are committed to doing good.

After the parable, Jesus speaks to us of the importance of trustworthiness. I would suggest that Jesus is talking about character. From my perspective, character is the forgotten virtue. The character of a person is measured by his or her lived principles. At the end of the Gospel, Jesus reminded his listeners that no one can serve two masters. One cannot serve God and money. This is an important reminder for us about priorities. Do we put God first in our lives? For us as Catholics, one barometer of the priority we give to God is Sunday Mass attendance.

Today’s reading from Timothy reminds us to pray for everyone. Everyone needs our prayers as we also need theirs. However, Paul specifically mentions praying for kings and all in authority. Several times I have mentioned the divisions within the world, our country, and our Church. We really should pray for all leaders of government on whatever level that they will work to promote not just the good of their own people but the good of all people. We need to pray for all leaders of the Church that they will be servants of the Gospel of Jesus Christ and will work to promote unity rather than division within the Church.

My brothers and sisters, on a personal note, last Tuesday I completed my radiation treatments. I want to thank all of you for all your support, especially your prayers. I had 44 treatments with very minimal side effects, which enabled me to continue to work in the parish. I really attribute the minimal side effects and my ability to keep working to your prayers.

During the course of treatments, they do not check to see how successful they are. They only checked to make sure that I was receiving the right dosage in the right areas and to monitor the side effects. In approximately six weeks, I will have my PSA checked and then meet with the doctor for the results.

Also, I recently had my annual physical. According to the blood work, I am slightly anemic. That should not be a side effect of radiation. Therefore, they will be re-checking it in a month. In other words, please keep praying that I am healed of the cancer and that I am in otherwise good health. Again, thank you for all your prayers, cards, and well wishes. Please continue to pray for me.