

SUNDAY 25 YR C

Next Sunday will be Social Justice Sunday, and we will hear the story of Lazarus in the gospel, a most appropriate parable.

Today's lessons are also about social justice, an appropriate lead in to next week.

The first reading from Amos dates back to the mid 700's b.c.

At that time the country was divided into two kingdoms Israel in the north and Judah in the South.

Israel was the most affluent kingdom; where it was only the upper class who were wealthy & who exploited the poor.

They thought only about profits and were unscrupulous in their efforts in getting the highest profits possible.

Amos was an advocate of social justice and was therefore horrified at their tactics and prophesied their downfall.

Jesus in the gospel has a similar story about social justice and how we should not be so attached to money and possessions that they take ownership over us.

At first glance this is a rather strange Gospel as Jesus appears to be supporting the dishonest antics of the steward. The clever, but dishonest, steward converts his masters debtors into people who are indebted to him by his generosity towards them. In fact what he did was to buy their friendship out of his own income.

As his masters steward when he collected his master's debts he would have added a substantial amount to them as a type of commission. That's how he made a good living. By deducting his commission from the debt, he was buying friendships for the future.

St Augustine once said "I can't believe that this story came from the mouth of our Lord." Maybe he didn't understand it as we do today.

There are several morals in this parable that are worth exploring.

Obviously Jesus was not condoning the steward's supposed dishonesty, only his resourcefulness.

We Christians should be just as prudent and resourceful in acquiring Christian goodness, as the steward was in acquiring the good will of his master's debtors.

This parable invites us to take inventory of the resources God has placed in our care. Some of these resources are our time, our talents, our treasure, our opportunities, health, intelligence, education etc.

We are challenged to use these resources wisely so that they will count for our good in the next life.

As Christians we must direct our attention to those things that concern our souls, rather than worldly matters.

We begin to be real and effective Christians when we spend as much time and effort on spiritual matters as we do on worldly activities.

There are some life messages for us today

How we handle our money and possessions is a test of our character. It reveals whether or not we are morally qualified to receive the true riches of Heaven.

How do we treat others in all things but especially their feelings? “If you cannot be trusted with what is not yours, who shall give you what is your very own”.

Today’s parable gives us some practical advice. We are urged to stride into the future with confidence- not in our own abilities so much as in the power and grace of God. The steward in the story used all his resources to secure his future. We must be no less resourceful in securing our future in Heaven by using the talents that God has placed in our care.

The dishonest steward bought friendship. Let’s be careful here, by our efforts to become good stewards we are not buying our way into heaven, Heaven is not a reward solely for good works, but by being generous, less selfish and less self -centered, we become the sort of person more likely to gain the reward of eternal life.

So in our Eucharist today let us commit ourselves to be the best stewards possible of the treasures God has blessed us with.

This leads me into another aspect.

In your credo today there is a reference to the needs of the Rangala Baby home, our children's collection does a great job in meeting the day to day needs of the babies. From time to time we are asked to help out in other areas.

Sr Esther has emailed us seeking help in several areas that will cost around \$7800.

This weekend and next we will pass the jars around the congregation and on behalf of the rangala babies, we seek your generous help. Sr Esther's email and some photos are on the board at the back of the church.(Also I will show some photos as the jars are passed around)

If you aren't ready today please do so next week.

We have taken on a serious responsibility for Rangala, as we are their primary support.

Today's readings give us a great insight into the way we support others and the words of St Mary of the Cross come to mind.

“Never see a need without doing something about it.”

Thank you for your support and generosity.

