**25thSUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME [22ndSeptember, 2013]**

READINGS: Amos 8:4-7/ 1 Tim. 2:1-8/ Luke 16:1-13

THEME: STEWARDSHIP

By Very Rev. Fr. John Louis ([http://frlouis.com](http://frlouis.com/))

In God the virtues of mercy and justice blend perfectly. He, who is perfectly merciful, is perfectly just as well, because He is perfection itself. Last Sunday’s message was about God’s ineffable mercy and forgiveness; today’s is about the stewardship that His justice requires of us. In His goodness, God has entrusted us with many resources; and He expects us to account for how we use them. Let me sum up what God has endowed each of us with by the 3‘T’s = TIME, TALENT and TREASURE. In view of the readings, I will dwell briefly on the first two ‘T’s and more on the third one.

TIME: We are to one day account for the way we have used our time. The seconds, minutes, hours, days, weeks, months and years of our lives vary; and so each of us is a unique steward for the time allotted him/her on this earth. Are we using our time to glorify God, to help others and to enhance the ***talent*** and ***treasure*** given us?

TALENT: How are we using our inherent natural gifts and/or gifts of the Holy Spirit? Once again, we shall pass God’s test of stewardship if we use our talents to glorify God, to help others and to enhance our treasure.

TREASURE: How are we using our wealth or occupation? In the first reading, the prophet Amos denounced those who instead of using their business (treasure) to glorify God, used it to discredit God as they gloried in corrupt profits; instead of using their treasure to benefit the poor, they dehumanized them (e.g. they bought a poor person at the price of a pair of sandals); instead of genuinely enhancing their business, they corrupted it (its profit came from the tampering of measuring cans and weighing scales, and the sale of the refuse of wheat).

Today, we also dehumanize others in our business when we place profit above the value of human life and dignity. And we tamper with the measurements and scales when we squeeze out more profit than it is reasonable. As employees/workers, we tamper with the measurements and scales, when our work-input (hours and effort) is less than what we are paid for.

Worse of all, some people combine discrediting of God, dehumanization and the ***sale of refuse***: this is when, for instance, some people produce and sell fake drugs, foods, etc., with no guilty conscience at all. Imagine unsuspecting consumers literally buying ill-health and death! Beloved, I do not know how such immoral ‘treasure looters’ can pass the stewardship test by God.

What about the student whose occupation is to study and give good account of him/herself in school and thereafter? He/she dehumanizes him/herself by truancy and tampers with the scales through cheating during tests and exams. Certainly this cannot be to the glorification of God!

CONCLUSION: Beloved, like the steward/manager in the Gospel reading, we can begin to make amends today. First, he assessed that (after his dismissal) he would not be strong enough to dig nor be comfortable begging. He therefore decided to make friends through the resources he managed. Beloved, unlike the steward/manager, when we are dismissed from this life, there will be no opportunity to dig (even if we have the strength to dig) and no opportunity to beg (even if we are not ashamed to beg) in the afterlife. But fortunately we still have the opportunity to make use of the resources of TIME, TALENT and TREASURE to make friends with God: by glorifying Him and helping others with these resources. Amen.