



## September 19, 2010 The Twenty-fifth Sunday of Ordinary Time

*"You cannot serve both God and mammon (wealth)." Luke 16:13*

Dear Friends;

I have to be one of the richest people I know. I am so blessed by the richness of love and affection which you all have showered on me over the years. I most especially want to thank everyone for the celebration of my twenty-five years of ordained ministry, last weekend. My family and I felt the joy and the warmth of you all.

I am also grateful for all the gifts, tokens of your love. As was indicated monetary gifts went to a fund for items that are needed for the parish liturgies. We have needed a pall (it is a white clothe that covers the casket at a funeral and symbolizes our baptism) for a long time. The one we have is rather tattered and worn. So I have used those monies to purchase a new pall and a matching chasuble (vestment for Eucharist).

Liturgy is at the center of our faith-life as Catholics. It has been central to my life as a priest. In the liturgy we are reminded that we are all loved by God; we are all sisters and brothers; and we have a dignity that is beyond price. The pall that clothes the casket reminds us of our dignity as Christians and that our bodies are precious temples of the Holy Spirit. Thank you.

I have a dear departed friend whose family was from Oklahoma. He had all kinds of colorful expressions. One such expression was, "money is like manure (fertilizer), it doesn't do you any good unless you spread it around!" It seems as if Jesus is telling us something similar into today's Gospel parable about the wily servant.

Jesus is inviting us to see that wealth is not an end in itself. It is meant to be used not hoarded. A good disciple is one who knows how to manage wealth so it can benefit others. Wealth is elusive and can fade away at any time. It can be used, though, to serve that which is really important and will never pass away—the Kingdom of Love.

The parable that Jesus tells us is about a guy who knows how to make things work in a crisis. He is threatened by the loss of his job. The servant is amazed by his master's mercy. The servant could have been imprisoned. Now he has a window of opportunity before the clients find out that he can no longer negotiate contracts. So what does he do? He generously renegotiates the contracts to alter their debts.

Now the master is in a real bind. He could declare the contracts void. However the villagers are singing his praises for his generosity. And one thing meant more in this culture than money; and that was honor. His honor was magnified a hundredfold. The clever servant has also ingratiated himself with the clients who certainly owe him for the debt reduction. Everyone comes out a winner.

This is the kind of cleverness that Jesus looks for in his disciples. Our crisis is the coming of the Kingdom. Can we use what we have to serve others and attain lasting treasure? So let us spread the Good News around like fertilizer and help the Kingdom grow.

Peace,

*Fr Ron*