

Twenty-Fifth Sunday in Ordinary Time - C – 2019
Amos 8.4-7///1Tim.2.1-8///Luke 16.1-13
Appeal for Liturgical Ministers

→late one night, a robber wearing a ski mask jumped into the path of a well-dressed man, stuck a gun in his side and demanded.... “give me **your** money.”

→ Annoyed, the affluent looking man said.... “you can’t do this...I am a United States Congressman!”

→ “in that case,” replied the robber, “give me **my** money!”

→that is what the rich man in today’s gospel wanted: his money

→he had heard that his employee [his steward] was taking advantage of him...and whether that indeed was the case or not.... isn’t the main point...

→likewise the employee [steward] reducing the debt that various others owed his master is not the point of the parable either...

→what is the main point is that the employee was clever enough.....and wasted no time in planning for a secure future ...i.o.w...he took care of himself. PAUSE

→recently, I was reading the results of a survey that focused on how we view life today

→it asked a variety of questions attempting to rate our experience life

→[and] one of the more interesting questions was this..... “as a person living today ... what do you consider to be your number one priority....

→surprisingly....the results were very interesting

→ [well] the most popular answer was "financial security" [no surprise]

→number 2 was "good health"

→next was "job security"

→#4 was "family"

→and #5 was "taking care of myself and my well-being"

→"taking care of the poor" [well] was #8

→and surprisingly....."being a good Christian, or a good person, or being a person of faith...of serving God...being seen ///or [being] perceived as a religious person" was #10

→now obviously...../////.....-->the point of the survey was to consider where people's priorities lie.....and not to anyone's surprise the most popular was with money

→and amazingly...today's gospel story seems to parallel this recent study

---in fact...many of the same elements are present in both scenarios

→because in today's gospel story we hear the parable about a rich man and a manager who **both** have as a prioritymaking money.....[and]....being resourceful

→and...the response of Jesus is somewhat startling....because at the outset he seems to be praising the manager for his resourcefulness...his determination....his initiative

→but that is where the praise stops ----because in the very next sentence...///...

→we hear Jesus scolding his listeners....telling them to start using that same type of determination, resourcefulness, and initiative to serve God and the gospel message!

→and it is to that message that I would like to speak to you today....

PAUSE

→if you have **never** attended an Ordination Mass...I would recommend that someday you do...

→it is a beautiful and moving liturgy...at the Ordination Mass of a priest there are many things that happen....

--the person being ordained...lies prostrate on the floor during the litany of saints...as a sign of turning one's life over to God...the bishop lays hands on the head of the candidate to signify the succession of the apostles...the person's hands are anointed with oil as a sign of the reverence to be used in handling the Body and Blood of Christ...and finally you are vested in the garments of the office

→but there is one very small often unnoticed moment that often doesn't get much attention...it follows immediately after the Gospel reading...

→all in the cathedral fall silent and one person steps forward to the pulpit and says...

---let those to be ordained come forward...

→and one by one...the names of the soon-to-be-ordained are called...and each responds
“present”

--32 years ago...as a much younger person...perhaps being naïve and definitely with more blond hair I stood up and said **“present...”**

→that one word...was not merely a statement of a physical location...it was a statement of commitment...

→**present**...wherever and whenever the people of the Church call...

“present”

→at countless masses, confessions...and anointings of the sick... **“present”**

→at parish meetings, Bible studies, Adult Education and RCIA... **“present”**

→at retreats and missions, groups and organizations...school gatherings and assemblies... **“present”**

→at parish picnics, festivals and raffles, dances and luncheons... **“present”**

→at the joys of baptisms, confirmations and weddings...and at the sorrows of tragedies, sickness and shattered dreams.... **“present”**

→to the needs and wonders of the people of God.... **“present”**

→much in the same way...as when each one of us was held up in Church for the very first time to be baptized and made a member of God’s family..... **“→present”** PAUSE

--today I am appealing to you to be **“present”**... present to the needs of our parish and to each other...

→we have reached a point where we are desperately in need of liturgical ministers here at mass....

→those who have been serving in the various roles have been doing so faithfully for years...and I would like to offer my thanks for your commitment and service....

→but now we are to a point where it is becoming more and more difficult to fill all of the needed positions.....our current ministers they are being asked to serve almost every other week.

[→i.e currently have just 4 servers for 8:30 a.m. mass...only scheduled one per week...and other masses are not much better....we need more servers...even adult servers...]

→we need more lectors, Eucharistic ministers, greeters, ushers, choir members, cantors, and instrumentalists....

→and you might be saying... “I could never do that....I can’t get up there in front of everyone”.....yes you can!

→if you can say hello and open a door...you can be a greeter....**present!**

→I’m sure you go around your house and yard picking up things almost every day...you can be an usher.....instead of picking things up...help pass a basket.....**present!**

→if you serve food at home or to yourself...you can be an E.M.*present!*

→if you can read...you can be a lector.....*present!*

--and...I never thought in a million years...I could sing...let alone in front of people...but you can.....you can sing...I hear you every weekend [best singing parish I have ever been in] you can be part of the choir...and a cantor.*present!*

→...this is about God's family coming together around the table...and just like at home where we all pitch in and help whenever a meal is being served.....your help is needed here also...*present!*

→and so, I believe, that the true lesson of today's gospel...the challenge before us is to truly ask ourselves exactly where do our priorities lie these days...what do we hold up as important...as the source of our determination, drive, and purpose....our meaning as human beings

→I would hope that a part of our answer is being here in church and at Mass...and realizing the many blessings we receive each time we come together and worship

→in today's bulletin there is an insert....also on the table in vestibule...

→it is an invitation to join our liturgical ministry as well as the many other ministries and opportunities available here at the parish....

→please consider this invitation...this call to be "**present**" to the needs of our parish.

→last week I spoke of our joys and challenges....

→about the challenges our parishes and diocese are facing...

And about the opportunity for us to rise up...to meet and beat those challenges so that rather than having to eliminate or reduce....we can expand and maintain the great things that are happening here.

→be a part of our liturgical ministry...and the other groups of the parish

→be present.....ready and willing to meet and beat the challenges we face.

PAUSE

→the question being asked us in today's gospel...is this

..... **what do** we really value these days?

→is it our care and concern...our watching out for others

→our faith, our Church, our morals?....

→each other, our health, our well-being?...

→is it being "present" to our needs...

→I would hope the answer would be all those and more....PAUSE

→please consider sharing the gifts and talents every one of us has to further spread the gospel message.....

→decide to join us....by responding **" present."**