

Read

Amos 8:4-7

Psalm 113:1-2, 4-6,
7-81

Timothy 2:1-8

Luke 16:1-13 or 16:10-13

LIVING THE WORD

Twenty-Fifth Sunday in Ordinary Time

September 22, 2019



REFLECTION

The Gospel can be difficult to understand. The steward dishonestly charged much more than what each debtor owed, keeping the difference for himself. That is why, when he discovered he was losing his job, he called in every person who owed his master money and asked them to pay back the actual amount without his personal cut. In this way, he would have friends when he was out of a job. He was forced to be honest and lose his profits. Jesus said it is better for the steward to lose his profits and live in truth and harmony with others. If we are able to manage money, we should use this talent for God's service and not for our own interests. If we don't, money becomes a god or idol. Even if we only have a little money, we must be trustworthy with what we have and be gracious toward others.

? QUESTIONS

- ❖ What do today's readings teach you about the Christian life?
- ❖ What things do I consider necessary in my life that people in poorer countries regularly go without?
- ❖ How often do I spend time praying vs. daydreaming about material things that I want? Be honest.



ACTION

Did you know the United States holds more than four times the amount of wealth of the next richest country in the world and 41 percent of the world's total wealth? Ask yourself if you feel that you need luxuries beyond your actual needs, such as, the newest smartphone or flat screen TV. Say each morning you drink a five-dollar cup of coffee or latte. This adds up to thirty-five dollars per week! Think of what you could do to help others with this money instead of spending on luxuries. Challenge yourself to be generous to others and donate your money to a church or charitable organization.



The story of *Robin Hood* is really about social justice.

Watch the animated Disney movie



and ask yourself in what ways both the government and individual people have a responsibility to care for the needy. How does the greed of individuals affect others?



September 22, 2019

TWENTY-FIFTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

LECTIONARY #135C

Amos 8:4-7

Psalm 113:1-2, 4-6, 7-8

1 Timothy 2:1-8

Luke 16:1-13 or 16:10-13

Prepare for the Word

The following elements may be used by the catechist, teacher, or youth minister to prepare to facilitate today's session with teens. You may integrate this information into the reflection and discussion on today's readings.

Leader's Context

We return today to a consideration of the place of possessions and wealth in relationship to the place of God in our lives. Today's Gospel draws together many of the themes we have examined in the past few weeks, including our call to put Christ above all else, and to keep possessions in their proper place.

Q FOCUS: *You cannot serve God and mammon.*

Liturgical Calendar Connection

On Friday of this week, we celebrate the Memorial of St. Vincent de Paul (September 27). The society that has St. Vincent as their patron continues his mission of sharing goods with and serving the poor. St. Vincent stands as a model of the sort of living we will explore today, through which material things are used for the good.

Church Teaching Connection

Not only are we to keep material things and money in a good and proper perspective, we are also called to share the resources we have with those who are in need. Giving to the poor is a work of justice which is pleasing to God. In fact, when we give to the least among us, we give to Christ (see *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 2447, 2463).

Hear the Word

Use this resource, a Lectionary, or a Bible to proclaim the reading. The book should be held reverently or placed on a lectern. If possible, light a candle that is placed near where the Gospel will be proclaimed. Gesture for teens to stand.

Gospel Acclamation

Use the same musical setting that is used in your parish or at school Masses. Teens may help with music and proclaim the Gospel.

Alleluia, alleluia.

Gospel

Luke 16:10-13

Reader: A reading from the holy Gospel according to Luke.

All: Glory to you, O Lord.

All make the Sign of the Cross on their forehead, lips, and heart.

Jesus said to his disciples: "The person who is trustworthy in very small matters is also trustworthy in great ones; and the person who is dishonest in very small matters is also dishonest in great ones. If, therefore, you are not trustworthy with dishonest wealth, who will trust you with true wealth? If you are not trustworthy with what belongs to another, who will give you what is yours? No servant can serve two masters. He will either hate one and love the other, or be devoted to one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and mammon."

Reader: The Gospel of the Lord.

All: Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

Everyone may be seated.

Reflect on the Word

When beginning the reflection and discussion about today's readings, first refer to the handout for today. Ask teens what they learned about themselves and about Christian discipleship from performing the action for the week and journaling. Ask teens about the readings of the day: What struck them? What do they think the readings mean? How do the readings affect their own lives? Then begin the following reflection:

We return today to a consideration of the place of material things and money in relationship to the place of God in our lives. In some ways, our conversation today will bring together things we have reflected upon for the past few weeks, about putting Christ above all else, keeping material things in their proper perspective, and of the ways in which our commitment to Christ is to direct the way we live, all the time.

First, it is important to be reminded that material things are not inherently bad. We should be cautious when we read passages like today's Gospel, which speaks of "dishonest" wealth, in order to be certain that we understand the meaning behind the word and its intent. Some translations of Scripture use the word *worldly* where we read "dishonest" in this translation.

► **No matter what words are used, Jesus' point is clear. If we are not trustworthy with our lives and possessions, how can we be trusted with the treasure of faith and salvation in Jesus Christ?**

It is not only money or things that we need to think about today, but anything that gets in the way of living as people of faith. That said, money and things often do get in the way, do they not? Sometimes, Catholics complain that their priests talk about money too often. Perhaps some do, but the reality is, Jesus talked about money, and he did so because he knew how great an obstacle it can be to centering our lives on him. Put bluntly, money and things can become idols we worship, rather than tools we use in order to live Christ's mission in the world. Said more positively, the way we use money and things is a sign of the place of faith and the importance of God in our lives.

► **How are possessions or money an idol for you or your peers?**

► **How can possessions or money be used to give God glory?**

This brings us to the final statements in today's Gospel: "No servant can serve two masters. He will either hate one and love the other, or be devoted to one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and mammon" (Luke 16:13). The word *mammon* usually means "wealth, money, treasure, or possessions."

How easy it is for wealth, possessions, or the desire for them to become our master! You might be thinking this just isn't part of your life, at least right now. Maybe it is not. But consider this: when you think about what you might study, or what your future vocation or career might be, how often does money come into the picture?

► **What are examples of devotion to money or material things?**

► **Do you aspire to be a good person, or a wealthy one? How can a person be both?**

► **How does love of God influence the way you use money or possessions?**

Money is not inherently bad. Neither are material things, nor popularity, nor influence among one's peers. A problem arises when we love money, are devoted to having more or better things, live for popularity, and so on. We cannot serve God and the things that are not of God.

Wrapping It Up

Consider these points to conclude the discussion and reflection. Integrate the thoughts and ideas that surfaced during the discussion as well as the "Church Teaching Connection" on page 34.

What do you treasure?

Who or what do you serve?

What does your use of money and things say about the importance of God in your life?

Act on the Word

God and Mammon, 1

For this exercise, you will need slips of newsprint and markers.

If your group is large, form smaller groups of six to eight teens. Give each group two sheets of newsprint. Tell the teens to label one sheet "God," and the other, "Mammon." Under "God," write "of God," and under "Mammon," invite them to write "Not of God."

Ask the teens to write things that correspond to the heading. For example, on the sheet labeled "God," the teens might write virtues, corporal or spiritual works of mercy, or actions such as going to Mass, service, or care for the poor.

After the group has made their lists on each sheet of newsprint, draw them together for discussion: Which list is longer? What does this say to them about their lives? How might they more intentionally live in ways that are consistent with the "God" list?

God and Mammon, 2

This exercise will take advance preparation and requires space in which your group can move from one side of the room to the other.

Prior to the exercise, make lists of actions, attitudes, and behaviors related to God and mammon or "not of God."

As you set up the exercise with the teens, designate one side of the room as the side for things of God, and the other for things that are not of God. Explain that you will read a statement and each person is to go to the side of the room that they believe the statement fits under. Start with easy things, such as going to Mass or caring for an elderly person. Move to more complex situations that require judgment calls, such as fibbing to a friend to prevent the friend from being hurt.

Invite conversation throughout the exercise. How easy is it to become devoted to something that is not of God? What things most easily become "mammon" for them?

Faith in Action

For this exercise, if possible, invite a member of the St. Vincent de Paul society to speak to the teens. If this is not possible, ask a parishioner who regularly serves the poor to join you.

The Memorial of St. Vincent de Paul is celebrated this week on September 27. St. Vincent is known for his charity and work on behalf of the poor. He clearly was devoted to God, and his life is a witness to keeping a proper perspective on wealth and material goods.

The Society of St. Vincent de Paul's website is www.svdpusa.org. The Society is devoted to serving the poor, and has chapters in 132 countries around the world.

Ask a representative of the St. Vincent de Paul Society in your local area or a parishioner who is involved in your parish's outreach to the poor to talk with your teens about their ministry. Ask the teens to brainstorm ways they might become involved or support this ministry, through active participation, donations, or involvement in special collections throughout the year.

Closing Prayer

*Ever-living God,
your goodness enriches us with abundant life.
Teach us to be faithful and wise stewards of
your many gifts,
sharing them freely in service.
May you always be the center of our lives and
disciples of your Son,
who lives and reigns with you for ever and ever.
Amen.*

For Next Sunday

To help teens prepare for next Sunday's Mass, print, email, or share on a blog or social media the handout found on the next page. The JPG and PDF files are available at www.ltp.org/lwgr. Encourage teens to attend Mass with family or friends.