

TWENTY-FIFTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME, YEAR C

September 18, 2022

Today's Homily

Dishonest Wealth: Everyone Wants to "Make it" in Life, But How?

Last Sunday (in Ex 32:7-11), God threatened to let his wrath blaze up and consume the Israelites because they worshipped an idol, a molten calf which they created. What do we create and worship today? Self, an unrealistic dream of making it no matter what, money, celebrities, social media, power, or even our nation, could be some of the idols we create and worship in our generation. Among all the idols we create and worship, dishonest wealth or what in Greek is called Mammon, is more prevalent. What does Mammon look like? Take a look at your dollar bill and you'll know. The face of Mammon is money, a mega idol created with greed, shrewdness, and extortion, and worshipped with pomp by those who by desiring it have "strayed from the faith and have pierced themselves with many pains" (1 Tim 6:10).

The Lord knows all things and he knows how we do business. He knows that to keep our businesses open, we must be shrewd and inventive. He knows that business is all about maximizing profits and that the bottom line is all we care about. That is why we do everything to ensure that we're not in the red; but to whose detriment? The poor!

Fraudulent and dishonest business dealings or racketeering is prevalent in the business world: usury, extortion, foreign labor fraud, welfare and pension embezzlement, mismanagement of public funds, name them. But the desire to get more out of our business is not something new. The prophet Amos suffered persecution for speaking against dishonest businesses. The equivalence of the racketeering that Amos denounced in Israel (Amos 8:4-6) are manifested in economic policies that enable the rich to grow richer, the poor to grow poorer in a myriad of ways; the rich nations profiteering from poor nations, unequal business deals, unfair trade, or 'international aid' packages that continue to impoverish the beneficiaries in most third world nations.

Usury, that is, the practice of lending money with high interests or increasing the prices of items to maximize profits, is another way of getting wealth dishonestly. Usury is prohibited both by divine and civil law, but the practice is what still keeps many businesses running. Sellers are the perpetrators and gullible consumers are the victims. Scripture says, "A merchant can hardly keep from wrongdoing, nor can a shopkeeper stay free from sin" (Sirach 26:29).

How did the Lord address fraudulent and dishonest business dealings? He wants us to be creative and innovative in the business of God's Kingdom. Jesus used the parable of the dishonest steward to teach us about authentic stewardship. The Lord is not praising the steward for his frauds but for his shrewdness and creativity as a child of this generation. The wisdom behind the story is to unveil the subtle practice of usury. This is the point: Jews were forbidden to lend to Jews at interest. Before he was fired, the dishonest steward had added his usurious commission in the business transaction. All he did was to forgo his commission. So he slashed the percentage that would have come to him to reflect the real amount owed to the master and that made him look good to his master's debtors.

What is the intention behind your ministry or stewardship? There are parents who volunteer as catechists or teachers only because their children are in the Religious Ed class. Some give their time in exchange for fee reduction or no fees at all. But authentic stewardship requires us to be "trustworthy in very small matters [in order to be] trustworthy in great ones" (Luke 16:10).

We might all be guilty of profiteering or usury in various ways and there's no reason to point accusing finger at others. Instead of complaining and blaming others, especially the wealthy or those in civil authorities, accept them and pray for them to provide a worthy framework that will promote the dignity of human life. God wills all people to be saved and come to knowledge of the truth. And that includes all fraudsters and scammers.

Our one mediator, Christ Jesus, is Lord over all people, the rich and the poor, the rulers and the ruled, leaders and followers. Let the Holy Spirit purify and renew our hearts so that we may give and serve with surrender to the Lord who poured out, who emptied himself and did not count equality with his Father.

Dear friends, the Lord takes no delight in firing us for our dishonest stewardship. But he wants us to be stewards of the resources we have received freely from him and with grateful hearts, use them to minister to the needs of the poor among us. We need to learn from the Lord so that all may "regard us: as servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God" (1Cor4:1).

The Lord wants to transform our shrewdness in acquiring dishonest wealth into prudence and wisdom in the economy of our salvation and the business of his kingdom. So bring your energy, inventiveness, and creativity to win heavenly wealth and friends in the kingdom of God. God bless you!

Fr. Godwin Akpan, S.S.J., Pastor

“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 God and mammon” (Luke 16:13).

Tithes and Offerings for September 11, 2022
\$5,898.00

Parish Ministry Listening Session

Fr. Godwin Akpan, S.S.J our new pastor, will be holding a Parish Ministry Listening Session for all Ministry and Organization Leaders at Transfiguration on Saturday, September 24, 2022 from 9:00 AM until 12 Noon. You will be contacted by your Ministry Leader. Please plan to attend this important session. Lunch will be provided.

RCIA Inquiry

The **Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults** Inquiry Period has begun. Anyone wishing to become Catholic; receive the sacrament of Baptism, Eucharist, and Confirmation or renew your Catholic Faith may see a RCIA team member in the patio after mass. Registration will take place every Sunday in September. Classes begin October 4, 2022. For more details call Anita Thomas at 323.810.0696.

Mass in Recognition of All Immigrants

The Mass in Recognition of All Immigrants will be **this Sunday, September 18, 2022, at 3:30 PM** at the Cathedral of Our Lady of the Angels in Downtown Los Angeles. This celebration brings us together to recognize the beauty of service to those in need, along with our call to work towards immigration reform. All are welcome.

September 18, 2022
CATECHETICAL SUNDAY

Join us at the 10:00 AM Mass
to congratulate
Transfiguration Catechists and Teachers!



Mass Intentions for...

Sunday, September 18, 2022

8:00 a.m. Intention of all Parishioners
10:00 a.m. Souls of Gloria Lambey Augustine,
Mary Brule, Milton Keys,
and Benito Martinez

Sunday, September 25, 2022

8:00 a.m. Soul of Henry Marine, Jr.
10:00 a.m. Intention of all Parishioners

Daily Scripture Readings

Sunday Am 8:4-7, Ps 113:1-8, Lk 16:1-13
Monday Prv 3:27-34, Lk 8:16-18
Tuesday Prv 21:1-13, Lk 8:19-21
Wednesday Eph 4:1-13, Mt 9:9-13
Thursday Eccl 1:2-11, Lk 9:7-9
Friday Eccl 3:1-11, Lk 9:18-22
Saturday Eccl 11:9-12:8, Lk 9:43b-45
Sunday Am 6:1a-7, Ps 146:7-10, Lk 16:19-31

Mask Requirement

Fr. Godwin Akpan, S.S.J our new pastor, will abide by the Los Angeles County Health Department and the Archdiocese of Los Angeles Guidelines regarding the use of face masks at public gatherings. Therefore, the use of masks at Transfiguration will be at individual's discretion.

For additional information visit:

<http://publichealth.lacounty.gov/media/Coronavirus/guidances.htm>

Thank You

The beautiful flowers on the altar were donated by *Cynthia Richardson* in memory of her father **MILTON KEYS**. If you would like to donate flowers, please call the rectory for more details.

Pray for the Sick

Deacon Emile Adams, Jon Adams, Glenda Alexander, Brian Argusta, Baby Caroline, Eileen Bacon, Gerald Bill, Vivian Burgess, Brownie Cain, Christopher Chestnut, Sister Ann Paul Clare, Jo Ann Collins, Joseph Colvin, Cynthia Cyrus, Juanita Davis, Carolyn Didney, Beverly Colvin-Dorsey, Bobby Eason, Mark Eason, Cynthia Fortier, Sherie Frierson-Chenier, Avis Gibbs, Barbara Harris, Jennifer Hallman, Sister Marianna Halsmer, Eddie Hiley, Barbara J. Jones, Marjorie Jones, Briana Katz, Barbara Lagarde, Irwin Lagarde, Christian Latigue, Mercedes LeBlanc, Vydred Manor, Anna Moran, Dorothy Okoye, Carol Powell, Sally Price, Wiley Pugh, Kayla Samuel, Vanessa Samuels, Dana Semien, Dudley Semien, Mike Simon, Joan Spencer, Charlize Taylor, Leila Thomas, Iris Turner, Shane Walters, Mabel Walton, William Warrior, Alice Williams, Jacqueline Williams and Peggy Wilson.