

Twenty-Fifth Week in Ordinary Time – Year C (2025)

In William Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*, Act 4, Scene 1, we have this most delightful phrase, "desperate times breed desperate measures."

St. Luke described his own version of this well-known proverb in the parable of the "shrewd manager" given to us in his 16th chapter.

The manager learned that he was going to lose his job, so he offered attractive discounts of up to 50% to those customers who were in debt to his boss. You can hear him whisper after every transaction, "Listen, brother, you owe me one."

I can't help but remember the opening scene from the film "The Godfather." The funeral director asks the Don for a favor, to give him justice.

The Godfather, who can refuse no reasonable request on the day of his daughter's wedding, agrees. However, there is a catch when he tells the undertaker, "someday, and that day may never come, I'll call upon you to do a service for me."

The man who just got fired may have had a lot of flaws, but stupidity was not one of them.

He thinks, he plans, and he schemes to create any advantage possible to free himself from his perilous situation.

His stroke of genius releases him from his master's debt, and in his back pocket, he has several friends on whom he can call to return his favor.

Jesus makes clear that the behavior of the shrewd manager is outrageous, and yet he uses this example to encourage his followers to focus on the kingdom of God with the same astute resourcefulness as the manager exhibited in saving himself from either digging ditches or begging on the streets.

St. Luke uses a literary technique called **hasty generalization**, which is an argument that is based on mistaken reasoning.

For example. If John says his grandparents do not know how to use a computer. John thinks that all older people must be technologically illiterate.

Every new day is awash in untold opportunities to grow in our love for God and neighbor, if only we would focus on them with the same deceitful imagination as the dishonest manager.

“For the children of this world are more prudent in dealing with their own generation than are the children of light.” Lk 16:18

Just as the unjust steward acted with urgency to secure his temporal well-being, believers should act with equal wisdom and zeal to address their spiritual state.

This generation, Jesus declares, knows how to leverage their meagerness of gifts, resources, and talents in a way that benefits them. And so should we.

Unfortunately, “the children of light” reject such shrewdness and prudence out of a sense of false piety, naivety, or fearfulness. Yet the *Catechism*, in speaking of prudence, says it “is not to be confused with timidity or fear, nor with duplicity or disguise.”

As children of the light, we should seek to use every spiritual and material means available to us to build up the Kingdom of God, to proclaim the Gospel, and to defend the Catholic Faith. The Kingdom of God means that much! He wants to see the children of God make the same kinds of decisions.

Suppose we were as clever and cunning as the manager in this parable. Wouldn't we do anything possible to go out of our way to do as much as we possibly could for "the least of our brothers and sisters" and receive a great reward for our virtuous behavior?

Someone might think, "Well, that doesn't seem like the right motivation for doing good things."

However, Jesus has a healthy understanding of what it takes to use earthly wealth as a means for the necessary goods of life and for works of charity in preparation for an eternal dwelling.

"But remember, honesty is a virtue, dishonesty is an art." Victor Courage