

SHREWD TO SERVE

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"The wise man does not lay up his treasures. The more he gives to others, the more he has for himself." — Niccolò Machiavelli

What does it mean to be wise? Today, we encounter a strange lesson from the parable of the Parable of the Unjust Steward. At first glance, it looks puzzling that a dishonest steward is commended for his shrewdness. Yet, his actions illustrate a crucial principle: we are called to use our resources prudently to build connections and secure our well-being.

Facing the loss of his position, the steward takes the initiative in securing his future. Although his tactics are unethical, they prompt a reflection on our resource management. If individuals in the secular world can act with such cunning, how much more should those who are "children of light" utilize their resources wisely for the Kingdom!

Jesus invites us to reflect on our use of money and possessions, urging us to employ our gifts to bless others and draw them closer to God. Worldly wealth is not inherently evil; it is a tool that can foster relationships and further God's work—reducing hopelessness, offering solace and friendship.

There's a story about a pastor who wanted to emphasize generosity in his congregation. He announced, "We will take a second offering next week. This one is for a new chandelier!" A little boy in the front row raised his hand and asked, "What's a chandelier?" The pastor explained, but the boy frowned and said, "Well, can we get one that shines like the love of God instead?" This story illustrates the idea that our focus should be on making God's love shine rather than accumulating material wealth.

We often build our identities around what we can achieve or accumulate. This is reminiscent of a group of people engaged in a tug-of-war, pulling on a rope until they exhaust themselves, only to fall over realizing the futility of their struggle. We may ask ourselves, "What are we pulling for?" Are we truly investing our time and energies into matters that genuinely matter?

In the First Reading, we encounter a passionate call to justice, where the prophet Amos exposes the harsh realities of exploitation and greed that entrap the poor and vulnerable. He paints a picture of a society prioritizing profit over people,

where merchants eagerly count their coins while ignoring the cries of those in need. Amos' words remind us of our moral responsibility to seek justice and hold accountable those who ignore the marginalized.

As we consider our resources, let's remember that the greatest treasures we can share are love, hope, and joy. Are we trustworthy with what we have? Are we gripping tightly to our possessions, or are we willing to share and invest in eternal treasure?

The Responsorial Psalm offers a beautiful counterpoint, praising the Lord who "raises the poor from the dust and lifts the needy from the ash heap." In the Second Reading, Paul urges believers to pray for everyone—especially leaders—so that they may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness.

Jesus reminds us that "we cannot serve both God and money." This leads us to ask: "Who or what truly holds our allegiance?" As we navigate our lives, let us strive to be faithful stewards, generous with our blessings, and focused on what ultimately matters—building a life that honors God and serves others.

THE INTRODUCTORY RITES

Entrance Antiphon

(Recited when there is no opening song)

I am the salvation of the people, says the Lord. Should they cry to me in any distress, I will hear them, and I will be their Lord for ever.

Greeting

(The sign of the cross is made here)

P—Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

All—And with your spirit.

Introduction

(The priest may address the assembly using these or similar words)

P—The master praises the steward in today's parable not for being dishonest but for being clever. The Lord is asking us: "You see how resourceful the children of this world are! Would you, the children of light, be as capable as they are?" We have to be wise and clever with the things of the world in order to survive today. Can we not be just as wise and clever in matters of the spirit, in the acquisition of treasures that last forever?

Penitential Rite

P—Brethren (brothers and sisters), let us acknowledge our sins, and so prepare ourselves to celebrate the sacred mysteries. *(Pause)*

All—I confess to almighty God and to you, my brothers and sisters, that I have greatly sinned, in my thoughts and in my words, in what I have done and in what I have failed to do, *(strike your breast)* through my fault, through my fault, through my most grievous fault; therefore I ask blessed Mary ever-Virgin, all the Angels and Saints, and you, my brothers and sisters, to pray for me to the Lord our God.

P—May almighty God have mercy on us, forgive us our sins and bring us to everlasting life.

All—Amen.

P—Lord, have mercy.

All—Lord, have mercy.

P—Christ, have mercy.

All—Christ, have mercy.

P—Lord, have mercy.

All—Lord, have mercy.

Gloria

All—Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to people of good will. We praise you, we bless you, we adore you, we glorify you, we give you thanks for your great glory, Lord God, heavenly King, O God, almighty Father. Lord Jesus Christ, Only Begotten Son, Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father, you take away the sins of the world, have mercy on us; you take away the sins of the world, receive our prayer; you are seated at the right hand of the Father, have mercy on us. For you alone are the Holy One, you alone are the Lord, you alone are the Most High, Jesus Christ, with the Holy Spirit, in the glory of God the Father. Amen.

Collect

P—Let us pray. *(Pause)*

O God, who founded all the commands of your sacred Law upon love of you and of our neighbor, grant that, by keeping your precepts, we may merit to attain eternal life.

Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God, for ever and ever.

All—Amen.

LITURGY OF THE WORD



First Reading (Am 8:4–7) *(Sit)*

The prophet Amos castigates those who enrich themselves by exploiting the poor and the lowly, profiting especially from religious days.

A reading from the Book of the Prophet Amos

HEAR this, you who trample upon the needy and destroy the poor of the land! "When will the new moon be over," you ask, "that we may sell our grain, and the sabbath, that we may display the wheat? We will diminish the ephah, add

to the shekel, and fix our scales for cheating! We will buy the lowly for silver, and the poor for a pair of sandals; even the refuse of the wheat we will sell!" The LORD has sworn by the pride of Jacob: Never will I forget a thing they have done!

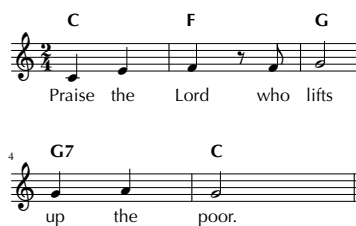
—The word of the Lord.

All—Thanks be to God.

Responsorial Psalm (Ps 113)

R—Praise the Lord who lifts up the poor.

E. C. Marfori



1. Praise, you servants of the LORD,/ praise the name of the LORD./ Blessed be the name of the LORD/ both now and forever. **(R)**

2. High above all nations is the LORD;/ above the heavens is his glory./ Who is like the LORD our God, who is enthroned on high/ and looks upon the heavens and the earth below? **(R)**

3. He raises up the lowly from the dust;/ from the dunghill he lifts up the poor/ to seat them with princes,/ with the princes of his own people. **(R)**

Second Reading (1 Tm 2:1–8)

The apostle Paul encourages Christians to offer prayers to God through Jesus Christ, the mediator between humanity and God.

A reading from the First Letter of Saint Paul to Timothy

BELOVED: First of all, I ask that supplications, prayers, petitions, and thanksgivings be offered for everyone, for kings and for all in authority, that we may lead a quiet and tranquil life in all devotion and dignity. This is good and pleasing to God our savior, who wills everyone to be saved and

to come to knowledge of the truth. For there is one God. There is also one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself as ransom for all. This was the testimony at the proper time. For this I was appointed preacher and apostle—I am speaking the truth, I am not lying—teacher of the Gentiles in faith and truth.

It is my wish, then, that in every place the men should pray, lifting up holy hands, without anger or argument.

—The word of the Lord.

All—Thanks be to God.

Alleluia (cf. 2 Cor 8:9) (*Stand*)

All—Alleluia, alleluia. Though our Lord Jesus Christ was rich, he became poor, so that by his poverty you might become rich. Alleluia, alleluia.

Gospel (Lk 16:1–13)

P—The Lord be with you.

All—And with your spirit.

P—A reading from the holy Gospel according to Luke

All—Glory to you, O Lord.

JESUS said to his disciples, “A rich man had a steward who was reported to him for squandering his property. He summoned him and said, ‘What is this I hear about you? Prepare a full account of your stewardship, because you can no longer be my steward.’ The steward said to himself, ‘What shall I do, now that my master is taking the position of steward away from me? I am not strong enough to dig and I am ashamed to beg. I know what I shall do so that, when I am removed from the stewardship, they may welcome me into their homes.’ He called in his master’s debtors one by one. To the first he said, ‘How much do you owe my master?’ He replied, ‘One hundred measures of olive oil.’ He said to him, ‘Here is your promissory note. Sit down and quickly write one for fifty.’ Then

to another the steward said, ‘And you, how much do you owe?’ He replied, ‘One hundred kors of wheat.’

The steward said to him, ‘Here is your promissory note; write one for eighty.’ And the master commended that dishonest steward for acting prudently.

“For the children of this world are more prudent in dealing with their own generation than are the children of light. I tell you, make friends for yourselves with dishonest wealth, so that when it fails, you will be welcomed into eternal dwellings. 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.”

—The Gospel of the Lord.

All—Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

Homily (*Sit*)

Profession of Faith (*Stand*)

All—I believe in one God, the Father almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all things visible and invisible.

I believe in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Only Begotten Son of God, born of the Father before all ages. God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, consubstantial with the Father; through him all things were made. For us men and for our salvation he came down from heaven, (At the words that follow, up to and including and became man, all bow) and by the Holy Spirit was incarnate of the Virgin Mary and became man. For our sake

he was crucified under Pontius Pilate, he suffered death and was buried, and rose again on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures. He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead and his kingdom will have no end.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, who with the Father and the Son is adored and glorified, who has spoken through the prophets.

I believe in one, holy, catholic, and apostolic Church. I confess one Baptism for the forgiveness of sins and I look forward to the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come. Amen.

Prayer of the Faithful

P—Almighty Father, you have entrusted us with stewardship of the good things you have given us. May we shun selfishness and greed, and use our talents and gifts for the spread of your Kingdom on earth, as we say:

R—Father, help us to be your faithful stewards.

C—May the Church’s ministers use the gift of ordination to serve your people as excellent dispensers of your many graces. We pray: **(R)**

C—May our national and local leaders exercise their authority with humility and sense of justice so that people may lead quiet and tranquil lives in all devotion and dignity. We pray: **(R)**

C—May businessmen and merchants shun dishonest wealth and profit at the expense of the poor and the destruction of the environment. We pray: **(R)**

C—May we show ourselves honest and trustworthy whether in small or great matters. We pray: **(R)**

C—May we never forget that at the end of our days, we will have to render to the Lord an account of our life, and so strive to live in faith, hope, and charity so as to be worthy of eternal dwellings. We pray: (R)

C—Let us pray for the urgent concerns of our community and our personal intentions (pause). We pray: (R)

P—Loving Father, you showered all of us with your grace and blessings. May we use them by actively participating in the mission your Son has entrusted to us. We ask this through Christ, our Lord.

All—Amen.



Presentation of the Gifts
(Stand)

P—Pray, brethren...

All—May the Lord accept the sacrifice at your hands for the praise and glory of his name, for our good, and the good of all his holy Church.

Prayer over the Offerings

P—Receive with favor, O Lord, we pray, the offerings of your people, that what they profess with devotion and faith may be theirs through these heavenly mysteries.

Through Christ our Lord.
All—Amen.

Preface (Ordinary Time V)

P—The Lord be with you.
All—And with your spirit.

P—Lift up your hearts.

All—We lift them up to the Lord.

P—Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

All—It is right and just.

P—It is truly right and just, our duty and our salvation, always and everywhere to give you thanks, Lord, holy Father, almighty and eternal God.

For you laid the foundations of the world and have arranged for the changing of times and seasons; you formed man in your own image and set humanity over the whole world in all its wonder, to rule in your name over all you have made

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and for ever praise you in your mighty works, through Christ our Lord.

And so, with all the Angels, we praise you, as in joyful celebration we acclaim:

All—Holy, Holy, Holy...(Kneel)

Acclamation (Stand)

All—When we eat this Bread and drink of this Cup, we proclaim your Death, O Lord, until you come again.

THE COMMUNION RITE

The Lord's Prayer

All—Our Father...

P—Deliver us, Lord...

All—For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours, now and for ever.

Invitation to Peace

Invitation to Communion
(Kneel)

P—Behold the Lamb of God...

All—Lord, I am not worthy that you should enter under my roof, but only say the word and my soul shall be healed.

Communion Antiphon
(Ps 119 [118]: 4-5)

You have laid down your precepts to be carefully kept; may my ways be firm in keeping your statutes.

Prayer after Communion
(Stand)

P—Let us pray. (Pause)

Graciously raise up, O Lord, those you renew with this Sacrament, that we may come to possess your redemption both in mystery and in the manner of our life.

Through Christ our Lord.
All—Amen.

THE CONCLUDING RITES

P—The Lord be with you.
All—And with your spirit.

Prayer over the People

P—Bow down for the blessing.
(Pause)

Bestow increase of heavenly grace on your faithful, O Lord; may they praise you with their lips, with their souls, with their lives; and since it is by your gift that we exist, may our whole lives be yours.

Through Christ our Lord.
All—Amen.

P—And may the blessing of almighty God, the Father, and the Son (†), and the Holy Spirit come down on you and remain with you for ever.
All—Amen.

Dismissal

P—Go forth, the Mass is ended.
All—Thanks be to God.