

25th Sunday in Ordinary Time

Luke 16: 1-13

The section title in the New American Bible for this parable (the translation that is used at Mass) reads, “the parable of the dishonest steward”. Section titles are not part of the text. They are the translators’ take on a text.

They are an *interpretation*.

With all due respect, I disagree with the interpretation.

The steward should be qualified by what *Jesus*

- is trying to highlight in him
- praises in him

The steward is not praised for his dishonesty.

The steward is praised for his *cleverness*: the parable of the *clever* steward.

It is important to situate and to grasp this.

This is in fact the very specific highlight of the parable,
through which Jesus is trying to make a very specific point.

Otherwise, it is somewhat crazy.

Otherwise, it sounds like Jesus and Ken Lay have made a pact.

“Make friends for yourself with dishonest wealth”... Hmmm.

There is a basic principle in reading Scripture that we must keep in mind:
we read Scripture in the context of the totality of Scripture (enveloped by Tradition).
At face value this does not “jive” with some thing like, say, the 7th commandment.
I think that we can safely say that Jesus does not promote dishonest wealth.

What is it, then, about this cleverness that is so important?

Jesus is telling us that *we are to be clever*.

The example is strange, but it surely hits home: money hits home.

How readily and easily we become shrewd and clever for money.

We are *similarly* to become shrewd and clever *for God*.

We are to be *intelligent for God*.

We do this by

- awakening our mind to the world around us (which prepares cooperation in faith)
- awakening our mind, in faith, to His presence

We also do this

- by intelligent stewardship of gifts
- by using the gifts we have been given for the sake of a higher end, i.e. God

This weekend throughout the diocese is “stewardship weekend”,
an opportunity to revisit the use of our gifts:
our time, talent and treasure...

We have a presentation from some of our fellow parishioners

who have dared to revisit the question of the clever and Godly use of gifts.

As you listen to them, ask the Holy Spirit to grant you

- understanding
- trust of God with the “mammon” of our lives
- generosity of spirit