



CELEBRATING AT HOME

25TH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

Investing in the future (Luke 16:1-13)



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Sign of the Cross

In the name of the Father, and of the Son,
and of the Holy Spirit.

Amen.

The Lord is here, present among us.

**We are gathered with the whole Church
in this moment of prayer.**

Preparing to hear the Word

Lord Jesus,

you are the wealth of God.

Lord Jesus,

you save us with abundant mercy.

Lord Jesus,

you draw us into the life of God.

Scripture Reading *(Luke 16:1-13)*

Jesus said to his disciples, 'There was a rich man and he had a steward who was denounced to him for being wasteful with his property. He called for the man and said, "What is this I hear about you? Draw me up an account of your stewardship because you are not to be my steward any longer." Then the steward said to himself, "Now that my master is taking the stewardship from me, what am I to do? Dig? I am not strong enough. Go begging? I should be too ashamed. Ah, I know what I will do to make sure that when I am dismissed from office there will be some to welcome me into their homes."

Then he called the man's debtors one by one. To the first he said, "How much do you owe my master?" "One hundred measures of oil" was the reply. The steward said, "Here, take your bond; sit down straight away and write fifty." To another he said, "And you, sir, how much do you owe?" "One hundred measures of wheat" was the reply. The steward said, "Here take your bond and write eighty."

The master praised the dishonest steward for his astuteness. For the children of this world are more astute in dealing with their own kind than are the children of light. And so I tell you this: use money, tainted as it is, to win you friends, and thus make sure

that when it fails you, they will welcome you into the tents of eternity.

The man who can be trusted in little things can be trusted in great; the man who is dishonest in little things will be dishonest in great. If then you cannot be trusted with money, that tainted thing, who will trust you with genuine riches? And if you cannot be trusted with what is not yours, who will give you what is your very own.

No servant can be the slave of two masters: he will either hate the first and love the second, or treat the first with respect and the second with scorn. You cannot be the slave both of God and of money.'

Reflection - *Investing in the future*

When bad things happen to us we are apt to spend a great deal of time being angry at what has taken place – especially if we feel that what has happened is unjust, unfair or unreasonable.

Today's Gospel episode is often called the 'Parable of the Unjust Steward'. But perhaps he is the one who is being treated unjustly. After all, the Master hears a rumour that the steward has been 'wasteful with his property'. Without conducting an investigation to find out if the rumour is true, the Master decides to dismiss the steward.

The steward spends only a little time trying to decide what he will do once he loses his job. Knowing he is too weak to dig and too ashamed to beg, he sets about altering the contracts of sale for his masters' debtors.

Is the steward stealing from the Master? No. In the ancient world such stewards were not directly paid by the master. Their 'wage' came from the commissions they added to bills of sale. So the steward is giving up his commission for the sake of his long-term future; to build goodwill among the debtors that they might return the favour in the steward's coming hour of need.

For astutely investing in his future the steward is praised by the Master. Jesus uses this allusion to advise the disciples that they, too, should invest in their future through the sharing of all that they have.

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The term *mammon* refers not only to money, but to all that a person has. The disciples, says Jesus, should be prepared to give away all that they have to the poor so that when the kingdom comes, in which the poor have the privileged places, the disciples will be welcomed into the 'tents of eternity'.

The final sayings of this Gospel presuppose that Christian life is a stewardship in which the wealth that one handles is wealth God wishes the whole world to share, not one's personal possession. Disciples must choose wisely and act decisively. When it comes to wealth, they must choose between the interests of God and their own self-interest.

If disciples do not share possessions, they will not be entrusted with the true riches of the kingdom. If they do share possessions, which are on loan from God, they will be given the treasure of heaven as their own. The disciples must give exclusive loyalty to God or succumb to the enslavement of mammon.

Prayers of Intercession

Lord, may the whole Church act with justice and integrity.

May it be a sign of hope and healing for the world.

Teach us to share all that we are and all that we have.

May we be a source of life for our sisters and brothers.

Help us to recognise you in the beauty of creation.

May we be responsible stewards of our world.

Lord's Prayer

Formed by the teaching and example of Jesus, we pray:

**Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name.
Thy kingdom come.
Thy will be done on earth
as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread
and forgive us our trespasses
as we forgive those who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.**

Closing Prayer

God, you are always gracious to us.
May we respond to your love
and become a living source of healing
for our world.
Through Christ our Lord.
Amen.

Blessing

May the blessing of God be among us,
and remain with us for ever.
Amen.



Journey into the Light

This resource is presented by the Carmelites for use by individuals, families and small groups as a prayerful celebration of the Word of God to help prepare us to celebrate the Eucharist with our worshipping communities. We are conscious that Christ is present not only in the Blessed Sacrament but also in the Scriptures and in our hearts. We are also conscious of the many people who, for various reasons including sickness and infirmity, cannot physically attend the Eucharist. Even when we are on our own we remain part of the Body of Christ.

In the room you decide to use for this prayer you could have a lighted candle, a crucifix and the Bible. These symbols help keep us mindful of the sacredness of our time of prayer and can help us feel connected with our local worshipping communities.

This text is arranged with parts for a leader and for all to pray, but the leader's parts can be shared among those present.

As you use this prayer know that the Carmelites will be remembering in our prayer all the members of our family.



The Carmelites
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