

MUSIC FOR THE LITURGY

Sunday, July 30, 2017 Seventeenth Sunday In Ordinary Time

4:00 PM 7:30 AM 11:00 AM

Gathering: Love Divine, All Loves Excelling

BB 472

Responsorial Psalm (Psalm 100)

All the earth proclaim the Lord, sing your praise to God.

Preparation You Have Called Us BB 644

Mass Parts Mass of Creation

Communion: Eye Has Not Seen BB 460

The Supper Of The Lord BB 351

Recessional: The Spirit Sends Us Forth BB 375

9:00 AM

Gathering: Let Us Go To The Altar BB 315

Responsorial Psalm (Psalm 19)

Lord, you have the words of

everlasting life.

Preparation Be Not Afraid BB 430

Mass Parts Mass of Creation

Communion: Eye Has Not Seen BB 460

Recessional: City Of God BB 383



St. Luke the Evangelist is now on Facebook! Go to www.facebook.com/stlukenh.org/ or St. Luke the Evangelist Parish – Newton/Plaistow and give us a Like! Please invite fellow parishioners and friends to do the same.

▼ PARISH TITHING ▼

Our Parish needs to take in \$7,000.00 each week in order to make ends meet. Thank you for your generosity to our parish! Your weekly contribution helps ensure that the parish remains a vibrant community. Please remember to submit your weekly gift even if you will be away. We depend upon your support!

July 23, 2017

Offertory \$6,720.25 Parish to Parish Support \$1,774.00

PARISH GIVING

Saint Luke the Evangelist Parish has engaged Parish Giving to provide parishioners with an opportunity to make your offertory and other contributions through Electronic Funds Transfer (EFT). Parish Giving is a simple, secure, and convenient way to manage your stewardship without weekly envelopes and without worries. It allows you to select contribution amounts and special collections right from your own computer or smart phone. You can be a good steward for the Parish even when you are away from the area on a weekend. Parish Giving allows you to print out a report detailing your contributions for the year. This program is available to parishioners at no cost. Log on to the St. Luke the Evangelist Parish website at http://stlukenh.org, click on the Parish Giving logo, and follow the easy registration instructions.

UPCOMING SECOND & SPECIAL COLLECTIONS

July 30, 2017	No Second Collection
August 6, 2017	Property Management
August 13, 2017	NH Missionaries
August 15, 2017	Assumption of Mary
August 20, 3017	Fuel
August 27, 2017	Missionary Co-op

ST. LUKE'S WEBSITE! http://stlukenh.org

Suggested Weekly Contribution **Based on Income** 5% Commitment annually/ weekly 3% Commitment annually/ weekly Annual Income \$100,000 \$5,000/\$100 \$3,000/\$60 \$75,000 \$3,750/\$75 \$2,250/\$45 \$3,000/\$60 \$60,000 \$1.800/\$36 \$50,000 \$2,500/\$50 \$1,500/\$30 \$40,000 \$2,000/\$40 \$1,200/\$24 \$30,000 \$1.500/\$30 \$900/\$18 \$25,000 \$1,250/\$25 \$750/\$15 \$15,000 \$750/\$15 \$450/\$9

Suggested Weekly Contribution Based on a Percentage Increase					
Your Current Offertory Contribution	25% Increase	30% Increase	40% Increase		
\$75.00	\$93.75	\$97.50	\$105.00		
\$50.00	\$62.50	\$65.00	\$70.00		
\$40.00	\$50.00	\$52.00	\$56.00		
\$35.00	\$43.75	\$45.50	\$49.00		
\$30.00	\$37.50	\$39.00	\$42.00		
\$25.00	\$31.25	\$32.50	\$35.00		
\$20.00	\$25.00	\$26.00	\$28.00		
\$15.00	\$18.70	\$19.50	\$21.00		
\$10.00	\$12.50	\$13.00	\$14.00		
\$5.00	\$6.25	\$6.50	\$7.00		

▼ PARISH NEWS

CATECHISTS NEEDED

Our Religious Education Program is in need of catechists for Sunday mornings. If you can help, please email Joyce at isszczapa@stluketheevangelist.net. Training will be provided.



CRAFTERS AND ARTISTS WANTED

If you or someone you know would like to be considered as a vendor for this year's St. Luke the Evangelist Christmas Craft Fair, a second jury period has opened up. Applications are available at http://stlukenh.org and must be received by Monday July 31st. Don't miss out on participating in this popular and well-attended event! For more information, please contact the Craft Fair at stlukenhfair@gmail.com or call the Parish Office at 603-382-8324.



SANCTUARY CANDLES

The Sanctuary Candles in both Newton and Plaistow may be offered in memory or honor of a loved one.

VIGIL LIGHT

The Vigil Light in front of the Blessed Mother Icon in Newton may be also be offered in memory or honor of a loved one. The suggested offering for each is \$10.00. Please call the Parish Office at 603-382-8324.

AMAZON SMILE DONATION

AmazonSmile.com is the same market platform as Amazon.com, but with the added benefit of allowing customers to donate 0.5% of the price of items purchased to a charitable organization. Please register today to start shopping and donating at www.amazonsmile.com. For questions, please call the Parish Office at 603-382-8324. Be sure to choose:

St Luke the Evangelist Parish, Plaistow.

NEW MASS SCHEDULE

Beginning **September 2-3, 2017**, our weekend Liturgy schedule is changing. Our new schedule will be:

4:00 PM Saturday - Plaistow 8:00 AM Sunday - Newton 10:00 AM Sunday - Plaistow

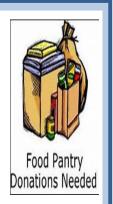
Please note that our daily Liturgy schedule will remain the same.

FOR OUR RECORDS

We need your help to keep our records current. If there are any births, deaths, marriages, moves, or address changes in your family, please notify the parish office by email itremblay@stluketheevangelist.net or calling 603-382-8324. If you are new to our parish, registration forms are available entrances of both churches. You can also find a registration form on our website at http://stlukenh.org. Thank you.

ST. LUKE THE EVANGELIST FOOD PANTRY

Food or care items are always needed – donations can be dropped off at Church or are welcome at the Parish Office during regular business hours. Cash donations for food are always welcome – make checks payable to **St. Luke the Evangelist Food Pantry**. All donations to the Food Pantry go toward helping the needy of our communities.



FOOD PANTRY HOURS

Wednesday from 10:00 AM to 12:00 Noon Thursday from 6:00 PM to 7:00 PM Friday from 10:00 AM to 12:00 Noon

For more information, call the St. Luke Food Pantry at **603-819-4949**.

WHILE AWAY THIS SUMMER...

We appreciate all of you who remember to send in your Parish Offertory during the Summer even when on vacation or visiting other parishes. Thank you for remembering that our expenses also continue through the Summer months. We invite others to consider doing the same before or even after you return home.

₩ WEEKLY CALENDAR ₩

Wednesday, August 2

9:30 AM	Eucharistic Adoration Begins	Plaistow
6:30 PM	Eucharistic Adoration Ends	Plaistow
7:00 PM	Scripture Share - Phillippians	Plaistow

Thursday, August 3

8:30 AM	Eucharistic Adoration Begins	Newton
1:30 PM	Scripture Share - Phillippians	Plaistow
8:30 PM	Eucharistic Adoration Ends	Newton

Saturday, August 5

3:00 PM Sacrament of Reconciliation **Plaistow**

Sunday, August 6

12:00 PM Baptism Catechesis **Plaistow**



Out of respect, please remember to silence or turn off your cell phones during Mass. Thank vou!

St. Vincent de Paul Society



Your "Dropped Dollar" Hard At Work

Thank you for your continued support of the St. Vincent de Paul Society! Please know that your "dropped dollars" are being used wisely to help the poor in our area. Your generosity does not go unnoticed.

Drop-a-Dollar in the St. Vincent de Paul box on your way out of church.

Remember ~ 100% of your donation is used to help those who need a hand up, not a hand out.

Our next meeting on Wednesday, August 16 at 7:00 PM. We meet downstairs in the Church Hall in Plaistow. New members are always welcome!

If you seek assistance or need information about the St. Vincent de Paul Society, call 603-382-8324 x315.

> Hear, OH LORD, and answer me for I am poor and needy.

▼ MASS INTENTIONS ▼

Saturday, July 29 ~ Vigil / 17th Sunday in Ordinary Time

1 Kgs 3:5, 7-12; Rom 8:28-30; Mt 13:44-52 4:00 PM Dena Carbone by Verna Carbone

Plaistow

Sunday, July 30 ~ 17th Sunday in Ordinary Time

1 Kgs 3:5, 7-12; Rom 8:28-30; Mt 13:44-52

7:30 AM Walter Halko by Janice Bettencourt

Newton

9:00 AM Edward DeMarco by Jim and Mary Anne Downs

Newton

11:00 AM Flora Pignatiello by Alex and Joyce Szczapa

Plaistow

Monday, July 31 ~ Ignatius of Loyola, Priest

Ex 32:15-24, 30-34; Mt 13:31-35 8:00 AM People of the Parish Newton

Tuesday, August 1 ~ Alphonsus Ligouri, Bishop and **Doctor of the Church**

Ex 33:7-11, 34:5b-9, 28; Mt 13:36-43 8:00 AM Elaine Mortell (Month's Mind)

Plaistow

Wednesday, August 2 ~ Eusebius of Vercelli, Bishop; Peter Julian Eymard, Priest

Ex 34:29-35; Mt 13:44-46

6:30 PM Rita Jarnot by the Brotz family **Plaistow**

Thursday, August 3 ~ Weekday

Ex 40:16-21, 34-38; Mt 13:47-53

8:00 AM People of the Parish

Newton

Friday, August 4 ~ John Vianney, Priest Lv 23:1, 4-11, 15-16, 27, 34b-37; Mt 13:54-58

No Mass

Saturday, August 5 ~ Dedication of Basilica of Saint Mary Major

Lv 25:1, 8-17; Mt 14:1-12 (Day)

Dn 7:9-10, 13-14; 2 Pt 1:16-19; Mt 17:1-9 (Vigil)

4:00 PM Roxanne Papken by Jim Edwards **Plaistow**

Sunday, August 6 ~ Transfiguration of the Lord

Dn 7:9-10, 13-14; 2 Pt 1:16-19; Mt 17:1-9

7:30 AM People of the Parish

Newton

9:00 AM Edo Crescentini by Jim and Mary Anne Downs

11:00 AM Martin & Florence Fogel and Frank Kelcourse

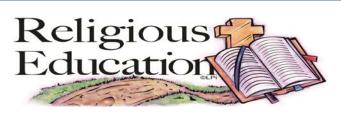
by Elaine Kelcourse

Plaistow

PRAYER LINE

St. Luke's offers a prayer line as a resource for those seeking prayer assistance. To submit your prayer request please call Cathy Smith at 603-382-8324, ext. 314 or email her at csmith@stluketheevangelist.net.

▼ FAITH FORMATION & PARISH INFORMATION ▼



ST. LUKE THE EVANGELIST RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Religious Education Registration for the 2017-2018 Academic Year for Grades 1 to 10 has begun. If your child is currently enrolled, a registration form has been sent home. If your child is new to the Program, please call Joyce Szczapa in the Religious Education Office at 603-382-8324 for more information.

ADULT CONFIRMATION

Are you an adult who has been Baptized and received Eucharist, but has not celebrated the sacrament of Confirmation? The adult Confirmation process is an opportunity to complete the Sacraments of Initiation. If you would like to prepare for Confirmation, or if you have questions, call Cathy Smith at 603-382-8324, ext. 305 or email her at csmith@stluketheevangelist.net.

ADORATION

We are truly blessed to have times for Adoration of Our Lord in our Parish. This time of prayer and intercession is not only a source of great grace for the individual, but it is a great source of grace for us as a parish family, as well.

We have many who have made the commitment to spend an hour each week with our Eucharistic Lord, **but** we need more people so there will be at least two people at each hour. We are also looking for people who would be able to substitute.

Plaistow – Wednesday 9:30 AM – 6:30 PM Newton – Thursday 8:30 AM – 8:30 PM

If you can commit to one hour a week in Adoration of our Lord, or if you can be a substitute, please contact Cathy Smith at 603-382-8324, ext. 305 or email her at csmith@stluketheevangelist.net.

GLUTEN INTOLERANT?

The Parish now provides an option for receiving Holy Communion for anyone suffering from gluten intolerance or celiac disease. We have obtained special altar breads that are fully certified for use at Mass by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, and laboratory tested to contain only .001% gluten. Please see the Pastor or the Sacristan before Mass about receiving Communion using one of these special hosts.

RCIA

The <u>Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults</u> is the process by which people become members of the Roman Catholic Church. **RCIA** is intended to serve:

- Those not Baptized who would like to learn more about the Catholic religion.
- Those Baptized in another religion who think they might like to become Catholic.
- Those Baptized Catholic but have not been raised in the Faith.

If you or someone you know is interested in inquiring about becoming a member of the Roman Catholic Church, call Cathy Smith at 603-382-8324, ext. 305 or email her at csmith@stluketheevangelist.net.

PARENTS BAPTISM PREPARATION SESSION

The monthly preparation session for infant Baptism will be held after the 11:00 AM Liturgy on Sunday, August 6, 2017 in the Parish Office living room. All parents planning to celebrate the Sacrament of Baptism are welcome. Families wishing to celebrate Baptism in the Church must be registered (according to Church Canon Law) and practicing (attending Sunday Mass) for 3 full months before a Baptism can be scheduled. The use of the envelope system is always optional; however, it does guarantee a manner of accountability. For most families, the Pastor or staff can easily verify attendance during these three months. Church Canon Law also regulates baptismal sponsors (godparents). Sponsors must be at least 16, fully initiated (having received Baptism, Eucharist, and Confirmation), and be practicing Catholics living Christian lives consistent with the Church's teaching. Please see Fr. Albert with questions.

 Parish Office
 382-8324

 Parish Prayer Line
 382-8324 x 314

 St. Vincent de Paul Society
 382-8324 x 315

 St. Luke's Food Pantry
 819-4949

 Preschool
 382-9783

 Presentation of Mary Convent
 382-2744

Fr. Albert Tremblay Cathy Smith Joyce Szczapa Jackie Tremblay Thomas Kondel Val Barczak Robin Thompson Parish Council fr.albert@stluketheevangelist.net csmith@stluketheevangelist.net jszczapa@stluketheevangelist,net jtremblay@stluketheevangelist.net tkondel@stluketheevangelist.net mvmbarczak@comcast.net rthompson@stluketheevangelist.net parishcouncil@stluketheevangelist.net

Parish News ~ Youth News ~ Around The Diocese ▼

JESUS ACROSS THE BORDER

Young adult Catholics, ages 18-35, are invited to join the Star of the Sea Parish on **Friday, August 18** at their Beach Chapel for a day at the beach followed by an evening of Adoration, Confession, and Mass. Kyle Erickson of Sing & Shout will lead acoustic worship and Fr. Chris Wallace will celebrate Mass. Adoration, Praise & Worship and Confession begin at 7:30 PM. Mass will begin at 9:00 PM and be followed by a "Beach Pizza" Social. Parking is free and private beach facility access is available all day for JATB participants at 140 North End Blvd., Salisbury. For more information please contact Billy Beauchesne via email at Jesusacrosstheborder@gmail.com.

21st ST. CHARLES 5k ROAD RACE

Labor Day Monday, September 4, 2017 9:00 AM – Pease Tradeport, Portsmouth, NH

Register at: www.runningnuns.com
Pre-registration 13 and over - \$20
Same day registration - \$30
12 and under always \$10

For more information, contact Jennifer Gilbert at 603-332-4768 or jgilbert@stcharleshome.net

WOMEN OF GRACE Our Lady of the Miraculous Medal Hampton, NH

The Women of Grace Foundational Study, FULL OF GRACE: WOMEN AND THE ABUNDANT LIFE, is a dynamic program for Catholic women, encouraging study participants to come to a fuller understanding of their dignity and vocation as daughters of God.

Meetings will take place on Wednesday mornings from 10:00 AM to 12:00 Noon beginning on **September 20**.

Registration deadline is September 8, 2017. For more information, contact Kathy Allen at 603-957-0048 or kallen77@gmail.com.

CATHOLIC SCHOOL REGISTRATION

St. Joseph Regional Catholic School in Salem, NH is accepting registrations for Preschool to Grade 8 students for the 2017-2018 school year. St. Joseph's provides a complete education designed to challenge and motivate students to reach their full potential in mind, spirit, heart, and body. Low student/teacher ratio provides each student a "front row seat to learning." For information, or to schedule a tour, contact Christine at 603-893-6811, ext. 19 or clatino@sircs.com. Check out Twitter to see why #welovestjoes!



St. Luke the Evangelist Parish will host this fundraising event on **Saturday**, **August 19**, **2017**, **from 8:00 AM to 12:00 Noon** at St. Luke's Parish Center, 8 Atkinson Depot Road, Plaistow, NH. This is a great opportunity to find bargains for students heading off to college! All are welcome. Admission is free!

Please plan to volunteer! We need lots of help on Friday, August 18 to accept donations and sort them and on Saturday, August 19 to collect money and to buy some stuff!

Spring Cleaning? Start saving your stuff for the Yard Sale – almost anything will be welcome (BUT PLEASE – NO clothes, electronics, books, broken or dirty items!) Items can be **dropped off on Friday**, **August 18 from 12:00 NOON to 7:00 PM**.

Questions? Call the Parish Office at 603-382-8324 for details.

ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION

Bishop Peter A. Libasci invites all couples who are celebrating their 25th, 30th, 35th, 40th, 45th, 50th or beyond Wedding Anniversary anytime during the year 2017 to attend a Special Anniversary Mass. This celebration will be held on **October 15, 2017 at 2:00 PM** at St. Joseph Cathedral, Manchester. If you are celebrating your 25th, 30th, 35th, 40th, 45th, 50th or beyond anniversary, please contact the Parish Office **by September 22, 2017**. We will need your last names, first names, and mailing address. Please also indicate your special anniversary. By providing your name to the Parish Office, you will be registered and will receive an invitation. There is no need for the couple to RSVP.

WEEKEND RETREAT

Our Lady of Hope House of Prayer New Ipswich, NH

Light In Darkness: God's Presence in Hope and Love

September 15-17, 2017

Registration Deadline: September 1, 2017

Please contact Sisters Rita Pay or Suzanne Rivard, p.m. at olhope1@yahoo.com or go to

http://www.ourladyhope.org

Saint Luke the Evangelist

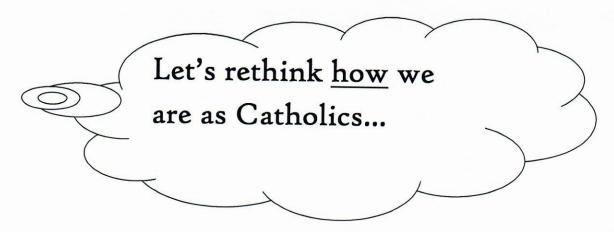
8 Atkinson Depot Road Plaistow, NH 03865 TEL (603) 382-8324 FAX (603) 382-1113

Discipleship is a lifelong journey.

Lifelong faith formation provides opportunities and experiences throughout the entire life span to strengthen our relationship with and knowledge of God. A commitment to lifelong faith formation serves to enhance our understanding of Scripture and of our Tradition. It sustains us in living as disciples of Jesus Christ.

As a reminder of last week's discussion, some principles that will guide our community in our process of renewing lifelong faith formation:

- The centrality of Sunday Liturgy as the "source and summit" of our lives as Christians
- The need to connect worship learning service
- The desire to be flexible for family schedules while at the same time providing quality religious education and excellent materials for students, parents and parishioners
- A need to dissociate our religious education programs from the "school system" and the "grade level mentality"
- A clear focus on the meaning of the Catholic experience



We have become used to thinking about learning our faith through a classroom instruction model. This model assumes that it is enough for young people to learn facts about the Faith, perhaps once a week during their formative years. After that classroom time... that's it!

Let's face it... deep down we have always known that takes much more than a class for people to develop a strong foundation in their Catholic faith. **Lifelong faith formation** emphasizes that the community is at the heart of all faith formation. "Faith is communicated by a community of believers and the meaning of faith is developed by its members out of their history, by their interaction with each other, and in relation to the events that take place in their lives." (Nelson, C.E., Where Faith Begins, Virginia John Knox Press (1967) p.10)

The life of our Church is centered in events that have the power to educate and transform individuals and the whole community. As Catholics, these include Church year feasts and seasons, sacraments and liturgy, justice and service, prayer and spiritual traditions, and community life. We know that these events are important to us, but we have to constantly learn how to participate in them so that we can understand them more fully. Only then will they have the power to change us both personally and as a Parish community.

Lifelong faith formation is a process of growing in the faith that begins with Baptism. Immersed in the life of the Trinity, we are adopted sons and daughters of God our Father, brothers and sisters of Jesus Christ and temples of the Holy Spirit. Like all human relationships, developing and deepening our relationship with the Trinity happens gradually and over time. Lifelong faith formation provides opportunities and experiences throughout the entire life span to strengthen our relationship and knowledge of God, Jesus and the Spirit; to enhance our understanding of Scripture, Tradition and doctrines of our faith; and to sustain us in living as disciples of Jesus Christ.

Catechesis is no longer for children only. If we are to be a church of true disciples, we all need to enter into the process of deepening our faith by continually learning and experiencing what it means to be a Catholic Christian.



Friday, August 18, 2017 – 12 Noon – 7:00 pm Saturday, August 19, 2017 – 8:00 am - Noon St. Luke Parish Center 8 Atkinson Depot Rd, Plaistow, NH

Please plan to volunteer!
We need <u>lots</u> of help both days!

SPRING CLEANING?

Start saving your stuff for the Yard Sale: almost anything will be welcome (<u>please</u>, no clothes, electronics, books, broken or dirty items)

BRING YOUR STUFF & HELP US SORT IT: Friday, August 18th – 12 Noon – 7:00 pm

HELP US COLLECT MONEY & BUY SOME STUFF Saturday, August 19th – 8:00 am - 12 Noon

Questions? Call the Parish Office at 603-382-8324

Coming to a Parish Center near you ...

St. Luke the Evangelist Parish 10th Annual Christmas Craft Fair Saturday, November 4, 2017

Set-up Thursday November 2nd & Friday November 3rd

Save the dates & start saving your donations.

As you spring & summer clean, please save:

New or antique items & collectibles for the Silent Auction...

New/as-new items for the Penny Sale...

Please start making Home-made jams, jellies, pickles, as well as knitted & crocheted items, for the Country Store...

We'll start collecting things at the church in October.

Please lend a hand to plan & run the Fair... contact Craft Fair at stlukenhfair@gmail.com with "Fair Help" in the subject line.

Thank you.



Bringing Home the Word

Seventeenth Sunday in Ordinary Time | July 30, 2017

Finding Wisdom and God

By Mary Katharine Deeley

Tf you could ask for anything, what ■ would it be? In the classic story *The* Monkey's Paw, a couple's first wish is granted but at a terrible price, and the owners realize what the old adage tells us: "Be careful what you wish for-you just might get it."

In the first reading today, Solomon

Sunday Readings

1 Kings 3:5, 7-12

[Solomon said,] "Give your servant, therefore, a listening heart to judge your people and to distinguish between good and evil. For who is able to give judgment for this vast people of yours?"

Romans 8:28-30

We know that all things work for good for those who love God, who are called according to his purpose

Matthew 13:44-52 or 13:44-46

[Jesus said,] "The kingdom of heaven is like a treasure buried in a field, which a person finds and hides again, and out of joy goes and sells all that he has and buys that field."

is given the opportunity to ask God for anything, and after praying, he finally asks for wisdom that he might discern what is right. God affirms the goodness of the wish and, noting that Solomon did not ask for riches or victory in war, grants it gladly.

In spite of some of his more questionable choices later in his life, Solomon will always be remembered for this request. Wisdom, as we find out in another part of Scripture, is God's "unfailing treasure; those who gain this treasure win the friendship of God" (Wisdom 7:14).

In today's Gospel, Jesus compares the kingdom of God both to a treasure and to someone who searches for one.

I think the desire for the kingdom of God and the desire for wisdom come out of the same longing in our hearts. We might find God's wisdom in surprising places, but once we find her, we must be willing to give all we have to acquire her, for she will help us know what is of God.

At the same time, the kingdom of God goes in search of us. Maybe we are God's pearls and, with wisdom as a guide, each one of us can become children and friends of God, knowing what is right.

Find wisdom, then, and do what you must to get her. When you do this, you shall also find God. †

A Word From Pope Francis

The Apostle Thomas, at the conclusion of his impassioned quest, not only came to believe in the resurrection but found in Jesus his life's greatest treasure, his Lord. He says to Jesus: "My Lord and my God!" [John 20:28]. We would do well, today, and every day, to pray these magnificent words, and to say to the Lord: You are my one treasure, the path I must follow, the core of my life, my all.

-Mass with priests, men and women religious, consecrated people and Polish seminarians at St. John Paul II Shrine, Kraków, July 30, 2016



- What are you searching for? What are you willing to give up for it?
- Are there riches or treasures that have a stronger hold on your heart than the kingdom of God?



Behind Jesus' Rich Man/Poor Man Parable

By Alice Camille

What's so bad about being rich? Is it a sin, after all, to work hard and

reap the rewards of your labor?

The Bible tells us that God hears the cry of the poor, and the Church teaches that God has a preferential option for the poor. This implies we ought to be looking out for the poor as well. So does this mean that God doesn't hear the cry of the well-to-do and God has it in for the SUV-driving crowd?

Lots of ancient morality stories deal with the disparity between rich and poor, and some of these tales fall into the category of "next-life reversals." We can see the basic outline of these stories in the parable Jesus tells of the rich man and Lazarus the beggar (Luke 16:19–31). Remember this one?

The rich man, called Dives by tradition (*dives* is Latin for "rich"), dines sumptuously every day, while Lazarus desires but does not get even the crumbs that fall from the rich guy's table. Instead, he sits outside, his running sores licked by dogs. But it gets better for our hero Lazarus. In the next life, he gets to lie in the bosom of Abraham in heaven, while the rich fellow groans in the torments of the netherworld. Not quite the end of the story, but that's enough for now.

Why does the rich man get the netherworld, while Lazarus gets paradise? There is no hint in the story that Dives is a bad man or, for that matter, that Lazarus is a good one. So we are nearly led to believe that being rich is the sin of the first man and being poor is the virtue of the second. But that's not right, either. So what are we to understand from this story?

Seeking the Full Story

Perhaps we want more details to fill in the blanks about these characters. Was the rich man aware of Lazarus at his door? Did he know about his hunger, the sores, the dog situation, and did he choose to do nothing about it? And how about Lazarus? How did he get to be in this awful predicament, and did he do anything to contribute to his striking lack of success?

We begin to imagine that Dives must have made a big mistake (something we might avoid with a little forethought); say, he forgot to give to the Bishop's Annual Appeal or the United Way. And seeing Lazarus in the bosom of Abraham at the end, we presume that he ended up on skid row, not because he was lazy, did poorly on his SATs, or had a drinking problem, but because he got laid off in a failing economy. What we want, in short, is evidence that the rich guy was a bad guy, and the poor man a victim of injustice.

But the parable tells us none of that. What we do know is that the rich man had a great life and Lazarus had a lousy time of it, and that after they died, their fortunes were reversed.

Final Lessons

Unlike many afterlife reversal stories from antiquity, however, Lazarus does not jeer at the rich man's fate from where he now sits in heaven, a sign perhaps of his goodheartedness. He never wanted to break into the rich man's house and take his stuff, either; he just wanted the crumbs.

And we catch a glimpse of the rich man's soul when he does not protest his final state but asks only to warn his brothers, still guilty of the same choices he made. This in itself may be an admission of his negligence. Dives acknowledges that his brothers remain blissfully unrepentant in their self-serving lifestyle.

The bottom line would seem to be that those whose needs are well-met (and then some) must have great compassion. No excuses. Suffering is all around us. So, pick a cause, any cause: But be compassionate! It's no sin to be rich, but it's a fatal error not to share. †

Source: *Every Day Catholic*, © October 2003 Liguori Publications



Lord, your death on the cross reveals the kingdom of heaven on earth. Help me be more aware of God's presence.

> From Faithful Meditations for Every Day in Ordinary Time Rev. Warren J. Savage and Mary Ann McSweeny

WEEKDAY READINGS

July 31-August 5

Mon. St. Ignatius of Loyola:

Ex 32:15-24, 30-34 / Mt 13:31-35

Tue. St. Alphonsus Liguori: Ex 33:7–11;

34:5b-9, 28 / Mt 13:36-43

Wed. Weekday:

Ex 34:29-35 / Mt 13:44-46

Thu. Weekday:

Ex 40:16-21, 34-38 / Mt 13:47-53

Fri. St. John Vianney: Lv 23:1, 4–11,

15-16, 27, 34b-37 / Mt 13:54-58

Sat. Weekday: Lv 25:1, 8-17 / Mt 14:1-12

