

Connecting With the Sunday Readings

Nineteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time

At the onset of the 21st century, there was a heightened sense of time. Television cameras were positioned around the world to record the exact moment when here or there it became January 1, 2000! There was rejoicing and there was anxiety. There was widespread concern about possible computer failure, a fear that proved groundless. There were some that were quite grateful to be passing out of what was for many the most destructive century in human history. Perhaps a new kind of peace would enter human history. It didn't take long for that idea to suffer its collapse on 9/11. As humans, we are time-rooted and time-obsessed. One interesting question to think about is: How much does a specific time influence what is? Or is all time equally valuable?

In today's Gospel reading the answer would seem to be that *all* time is important to God. God has given us all we need through the coming of Jesus. God's Spirit doesn't come and go like an occasional visitor or on a pre-determined schedule. God is not a Sunday-only God, but a God of all times. For us this means be constantly ready, be prepared at all times to awaken to the reality of God's presence. It could surface for you at any time, or as the Bible says, at a time you might least expect. But take this message as a positive. God is good and loving. We are already gifted. You have been touched and blessed by God and more can be given at any time. You can connect with God at any time.

A Gospel Word for the Home

Luke 12:32–48

The boss is coming, look busy. We all know what this means. Part of the role of managers is to make sure that those under them are doing their job. The workers need to be vigilant. If they are seen as wasting time according to the company's definition of what that is, they could be sacked or penalized. Today's Gospel speaks of masters and servants. Think of God as the master and us as God's servants. How does the contemporary image of bosses and employees help you see what Jesus is talking about in the Gospel? What changes when we pass from a secular view of this relationship to the one between God and us?

Everything. We live to receive all that the master (God) has given us. And to respond by using those gifts in service to the Kingdom of God in all the opportunities that come to us each day. We can enjoy round the clock involvement in the work of the Kingdom. Every place is blessed and every moment is holy. Whether we are in a formal religious setting, like Sunday Mass, or someplace else, like home or work, God's grace and call are there. Our job is to give thanks to God, and pass it on to others; to practice our Christianity in big and small things; not to let up. Living in God's Kingdom right now is possible. We need to pay attention at all times because we do not know when the Master will return but if we are responding daily to God's presence, and sharing our gifts and talents in the service of others, when the Master returns, the Kingdom will be ours.

Parent Survival

Children can be real burdens. We are told by some government agencies that it costs a typical family about \$200,000 to raise a child to adulthood. That figure includes not only food and shelter, but also all the little things that are constantly being consumed or needed like rides to soccer practice, tickets to the movies, life insurance for their protection, and dental bills. It all adds up. So it's not impossible to think of our children as big consumers of our limited family resources.

But there are other ways, other perspectives to use as we gaze upon them each day. They too are gifts to us from God. While they may have mom's hair and dad's nose and a whole host of other family traits, ultimately their being comes from and is supported by God. But it takes a second look, a special kind of awareness to think this way. Yet when we do, we have to admit that they may look a lot different and sometimes, much better.

Car or Meal Talk

Take an account of the gifts that have been given to you and your family by others. Be as complete as you can. See if you can trace the path of gift-givers all the way to God.

One-Line Prayer

God, source of our lives, help us to appreciate your goodness to us on both good days and those that are not so good.
Amen.