

Sub-Dean's Letter, 11 August 2019

Today is the ninth Sunday after Pentecost in what we call the month of compassion. It is not easy to find a unifying thread running through this Sunday's readings. I suspect the opening statement of the Gospel (Luke 12:32-40) comes closest to it: 'Do not be afraid, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom'. The implication is that the God whom Jesus proclaims is a God who longs to confer supreme benefits on human beings. Any blockage to the divine generosity comes entirely from us. All three readings, in their own ways, deal with this divinehuman interaction.

Jesus' instructions on how to be ready for the coming judgment continue in the stories and sayings found in today's Gospel. We are not to be like the greedy rich man in last Sunday's Gospel who planned to store his great harvest in barns rather than share it. In this month of compassion we are, rather, to share our wealth with those in need. The antidote for the anxiety brought on by the coming judgment is to relinquish our possessions and provide for the needs of others. Our treasure will be in heaven where it will not wear out or be destroyed.

In the following text Peter asks if this parable is meant for the apostles or for the large crowd that has gathered to listen to Jesus. Without answering Peter's question, Jesus responds with another parable about servants awaiting the return of their master. It begins with a question: "Who, then, is the faithful and prudent steward whom the master will put in charge of his servants to distribute the food allowance at the proper time?" This parable adds to the theme of watchfulness; it explains how to wait and reminds us of the reward for the faithful follower at the heavenly banquet after the judgment. If it is addressed to the apostles, then it could also be addressed to leadership in the early Church and in our time. Either way, the parables reminds us that we should be found doing our jobs when the master arrives. If we are doing our jobs, our reward will be great. But if we relax, neglect our duties, and begin to act like the greedy rich man—eating, drinking, and making merry—we will not have a place in the kingdom. Watchfulness means living in such a consistently moral and obedient way that we are always ready to give an account to God of how we have lived.

With all of this in mind, I would like to thank you very much for your contribution to the successful Archdeaconry family weekend this past weekend. I thank you from the bottom of my heart for your caring, qualified presence and assistance through which you have personified Jesus Christ. (Matthew 25:40-45).

You have worked with so much dedication, patience and competence for many weeks for the preparation of this important event in the life of our Archdeaconry and Diocese. More than ever you have honoured God through your faithful witness and service living out the Diocesan Mission statement. With your contribution and love gifts, we have managed to reach a target of R80 525, 10 and has just fallen a bit short of what we were asked to contribute (R93 000). Well done to you all of you. The Archdeaconry planning committee is looking at other fundraising efforts with the aim to reach the R93 000 target in the remaining 3 weeks to our Diocesan Family Weekend, (24-24 August 2019).

I wish you God's blessings in your Ministry and assure you of my love and prayers.

Mzinzisi Dyantyi, Sub-Dean