

Homily of Nineteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time Year C

The second reading describes Abraham's obedience and faithfulness to God. For this reason, Scripture calls Abraham God's friend:

"Our God, did you not drive out the inhabitants of this land before your people Israel and give it forever to the descendants of Abraham your friend?" (2 Chronicles 20:7).

"But you, Israel, my servant, Jacob, whom I have chosen, you descendants of Abraham my friend" (Isaiah 41:8).

"Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness, and he was called God's friend" (James 2: 23).

Jesus freed us from the slavery of sin and raised us to the status of friends of God. He says, "I no longer call you slaves, because a master doesn't confide in his slaves. Now you are my friends, since I have told you everything the Father told me" (John 15:15). In today's Gospel Jesus says to us, "Do not be afraid any longer, little flock, for your father is pleased to give you the kingdom." Every vocation, or profession, or responsibility is the kingdom God is pleased to give to each person. We are, therefore, God's friends and stewards of God's kingdom. The first character of a steward of God's kingdom is courage.

Jesus says in the Gospel, "Sell your belongings and give alms. Provide money bags for yourself that do not wear out, an inexhaustible treasure in heaven that no thief can reach nor moth destroy." The second character of a steward of God's kingdom is selflessness and compassion.

Having received the kingdom Jesus commands, "Gird your loins and light your lamps and be like servants who await their master's return from a wedding, ready to open immediately when he comes and knocks. Blessed are those servants whom the master finds vigilant on arrival. ... You must be prepared, for at an hour you do not expect, the son of man will come." The third character of a steward of God's kingdom is vigilance and preparedness.

Jesus adds, "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? Blessed is the servant whom his master on arrival finds doing so. Truly, I say to you, the master will put the servant in charge of all his property." The fourth character of a steward of God's kingdom is faithfulness and prudence.

"Thus should one regard us: as servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God. Now it is of course required of stewards that they be found trustworthy" (1 Corinthians 4:1-2). The fifth character of a steward of God's kingdom is trustworthiness.

"As each one has received a gift, use it to serve one another as good stewards of God's varied grace. Whoever preaches, let it be with the words of God; whoever serves, let it be with the strength that God supplies, so that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom belong glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen" (1 Peter 4:10-11). The sixth character a steward of God's kingdom is God-centeredness.

Unfortunately, in many homes, establishments, communities, parishes, states, countries and so on, we have stewards who, through their vocation, profession and responsibility, work against God's kingdom, by their unfaithfulness, by their beating the menservants and maidservants, by their overeating and getting drunk, by their unpreparedness, and by their ignorance. For us, this must not be so.

We are friends of God. We are stewards of God's kingdom. We are stewards of the mysteries of God. We are stewards of God's varied grace. By these, God has entrusted much to us. Much will, therefore, be demanded of us at the hour of reckoning. May we not be found wanting. Amen.

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