**ORDINARY TIME 25 C Lectionary Catechesis**

**Fr. Alan Hartway, CPPS**

**Guardian Angels Parish in Mead, CO**

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| Part III of the CCC is entitled “Life in Christ”. In two sections of this part, the Church organizes her teachings on Social and Economic Justice: Section I Chapter 2 “The Human Community” and the chapter on the 7th Commandment, “The Shall Not Steal.” Most of the citations for this week’s readings fall within these two sections. For those interested in the current culture wars, and what a Catholic culture is supposed to look like, these are two places to go. You will find that stewardship, prudence, and social justice are key concepts. Several Sundays ago we heard of the sins of Sodom from Ezekiel 16, 49-50. |

**FIRST READING: Amos 8, 4-7**

In this vision, God shows the prophet a basket of autumn fruit. Typically the prophets use literal objects to signify their point about the covenant. God demands that those who commit the injustices listed here both listen and be called to court for the sake of justice. The sins are violations of the 7th Commandment. God will not forget these things, but as God states in subsequent verses he himself shall withdraw from Israel. The Word of God will no longer be available to them. It’s a challenge for a reader to get the tone of voice in Vss. 4-6, and then switch from that rhetoric, to God’s sure decision.

**Vs 4-10: CCC 2269** The CCC interprets this to prohibit any complicity in human death by economic injustice, eg, the economics of famine, economics of war, the economics of capitalism, etc.

**Vs 4-6: CCC 2409** CCC lists immoral practices about abuse of others’ property

**Vs 6: CCC 2449** Dt 15,11 is God’s commandment about the poor; this may very well be the mother lode of all biblical texts having to do with the poor.

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| **KNOW YOUR**  **FAITH** | How do you see our modern world filled with the same practices listed by the prophet Amos? Give examples.  What behaviors do you think are meant by the 7th commandment now that you’ve read these readings? |
| **LIVE YOUR**  **FAITH** | Share your reflections on these interpretations of the prophet on the 7th Commandment.  What about our own capitalist culture of affluence would be the object of God’s speech today? |
| **SHARE YOUR FAITH** | Where have you seen God intervening today on behalf of the poor?  How can you “open wide your hands” to the those in need here and now? |
| **WORSHIP** | In light of this prophecy, what would authentic and pure worship look like? In other words reflect on what a person ought to do before approaching the altar.  What does the prophet say about our doing business on the Sabbath? |

**First Reading**

**RESPONSORIAL: Psalm 113, 1-2. 4-6. 7-8**

This responsorial is almost all of this nine verse psalm. There is a very clear and unequivocal connection between acts of social justice and the worship of God in heaven. God is praised precisely because when God looks down on the earth, he sees and attends to the needy, the poor, and the barren wife, not the rich and sated, whom Ezekiel condemns in 16, 49-50.

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| **KNOW YOUR**  **FAITH** | Why does God in the highest heavens bother to come down and look over the earth?  Why does God have a “preferential option” for the poor? |
| **LIVE YOUR**  **FAITH** | Where do you volunteer?  Share volunteering experiences with your group. |
| **SHARE YOUR FAITH** | What are the ways and means your parish reaches out to those in need?  Vs. 6 describes the commingling of all people regardless of earthly rank or station when God acts on the earth. What does this tell us about our human temptation to categorize ourselves and all based on power and economics? |
| **WORSHIP** | What does the Church by God’s glory?  Share your reflections on our human need to worship God. |

**Responsorial Psalm**

**SECOND READING: I Timothy 2, 1-8**

Here, Paul focuses on intercessory prayer, emphasizing its universal quality. He begins with the observation that the Church prays for everyone. This could possibly sound strange to our modern ears because our petitions are often regarding personal needs. His point is that prayer for those in office is really for our own good, that we have peace and tranquility. Vss. 5-6 is a “kerygmatic summary”. Paul rests on his authority as preacher to the gentiles to give this advice to the Churches led by Timothy. Note the final verse about hands lifted up; the folded hands prayer gesture is a later medieval and Germanic addition. Folded hands only appear quite late in paintings, statuary, icons, and mosaics. Vs. 4 is very important!

**Vs 1-2: CCC 1349, 1900** Affirms that Church should pray for those holding political office, including a

prayer of Pope Clement I, the fourth pope. Look up this beautiful 1st century prayer in CCC 1900

**Vs 1: CCC 2636** The intercession of Christians knows no boundaries.

**Vs 2: CCC 2240** References a controversial letter “*Ad Diognetum*” from the early Church, among its topicis to describe how a Christian lives in culture and society, as “resident aliens.”

**Vs 3-4: CCC 2822** The CCC reminds us of the command to love one another

**Vs 4: CCC 74, 851,1058,1256, 1261,1821** This verse is critical when it comes to the mission of the Church, which must reach out to all. All mission comes from God; as the Church has been given knowledge of the truth, so the Church must share that knowledge with all. Thus, no one will be lost. In #12565, the CCC teaches who are the ordinary ministers of baptism, and yet here we find it taught that even a non-baptized person can baptize in emergency by intending to do the will of the Church. #1261 is the only place in the CCC where the death of non-baptized infants is addressed, and the word “limbo” does not appear! Therefore, because of God’s initiating action of saving us and our dying with Christ in baptism do we have hope, and it is hope that all will be saved

**Vs 5:CCC 618, 1544, 2574** The focus of these citations is affirmation that all ministry begins with Christ.

**Vs 2, 5-8: CCC 2634** Teaches that the Church should pray for sinners and all people; the CCC makes no comment about this last verse and any recommended hand gestures, although liturgical gestures are a major concern in some quarters.

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| **KNOW YOUR**  **FAITH** | What is the Church’s connection between prayer for political leaders and social justice work?  What goes on inside you when you hear the Church speaking about politics and economics? |
| **LIVE YOUR**  **FAITH** | What do you take away home from this week’s readings?  How will this week’s reading change you life? |
| **SHARE YOUR FAITH** | How do we go about the work of building a Catholic culture?  Why is this idea of a “Catholic culture” so unpopular in America today? |
| **WORSHIP** | What does it mean for you to pray for political and economic leaders and authorities?  What posture and hand gesture do you use for your personal or family prayer? |

**Second Reading**

**GOSPEL: Luke 16, 1-13 Parable of the Wicked Steward**

Luke edits this parable and sayings of Jesus at the same supper at the house of the Pharisee as the parable of the Prodigal Son. Only here, instead of directing himself the leaders of the people, he turns to address the leaders of his followers. The segue comes because he is reflecting on the stewardship of the father and the two sons in the gospel, and the assiduous shepherd and the woman finding her lost coin. Vss. 1-8 is the parable itself, and Vss. 9-13 are the sayings of Jesus about our stewardship. It isn’t really just about the money. The wicked servant is clever with money but only to a point. The master got something out of the dealings, but certainly not the full amount. The master commends this wicked servant, the parable leaves the matter of the debts unresolved. Vs. 9 is just plain shocking advice from Jesus! The key word here is “trustworthy”. Jesus then ends the sayings with a pithy, well-known remark, “You cannot serve God and mammon.” This is also used in vs. 9 where it is translated “dishonest wealth” or more literally unjust wealth. Wealth is not inherently “wicked” in the gospel, but has the potential to be used for evil or idolatry. The notion of stewardship is here linked to the ethics of reliability and trust. Where does “mammon” come from? There is a possible link to a Semitic language root word for wealth. There is no linguistic evidence that it comes from some ancient Near Eastern god of riches.

**Vs 1: CCC 952** The Parable affirms our stewardship of all goods which belong to God.

**Vs 13: CCC 2424** Vatican II on just, social and economic order, see also CCC 2425. The two great documents on human society and the Church are “*Lumen Gentium*” and “*Gaudium et Spes*”.

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| **KNOW YOUR**  **FAITH** | Why does the Church concern itself with the political, economic, and cultural order if these things are not spiritual? What business is it of the Church?  What is stewardship and what does it mean for us today? |
| **LIVE YOUR**  **FAITH** | What do you think of CCC 2424 and 2425?  How do you practice prudence with what God has given you? |
| **SHARE YOUR FAITH** | How can we be good stewards of the gospel if we do not evangelize?  How does a person achieve trustworthiness with another person? |
| **WORSHIP** | Where are your hands during the liturgy? Identify all hand gestures at Mass and share why we do these things.  How does our Sunday liturgy serve God? |

**Gospel**

**Next Sunday: OT 26 C: Amos 6, 1a. 4-7; Psalm 146, 7. 8-9. 9-10; I Timothy 6, 11-16; Luke 16, 19-31**