

Commentary on the Gospel for Fri, Nov 6th 2015

Those who have never been told of him shall see,
and those who have never heard of him shall understand

Today's first reading is a powerful reminder to spread the Gospel of Christ not to the converted, but to those who have not heard of it. The reading resonates with me. As a professor, I aspire to teach and reach everyone. I try to pay special attention to those who seem to have difficulty with a new concept. However, I have found that words, although very powerful, pale in comparison with deeds. As the saying goes "actions speak louder than words." We are much more inclined to follow someone's advice if the person proclaiming it, is demonstrating its virtues. Similarly, a passionate and caring teacher who follows his or her teachings is more believable. It is not surprising to me that so many people are drawn to Pope Francis' message. He lives what he preaches and "walks the talk." He spreads the Gospel through his deeds. We admire leaders such as Nelson Mandela, Ghandi, or Martin Luther King Jr., to name a few, because they followed their beliefs.

Today's Gospel by Luke must be understood in the light of the custom that agents acted on behalf of their masters. Thus, an agent's dishonesty would stem from him squandering his master's estate. In this parable, the "master commended the dishonest steward for acting prudently" that is, the parable is teaching us to use material goods carefully. These readings made me think of the need to not only to be good stewards of material goods, but also of God's gifts and talents. It reminded me of Pope Francis' encyclical letter (*Laudato si'*) *On Care For Our Common Home*. He asks all of us to put "People and Planet First", not one at the expense of the other. Humanity is not separate from the environment in which we live; rather humanity and the environment are one. What kind of world are we leaving for our children? Our actions are selfish and wasteful. I think that the readings and Pope Francis call on us to "care." Care is more than stewardship in that good stewards take responsibility and manage the goods, but one can be a good steward without feeling connected to one another. As Cardinal Turkson said: "To care is to allow oneself to be affected by another, so much so that one's path and priorities change."

Today I pray that I may become a better minister of Christ in performing the service of the Gospel and in being a light for others. I pray that I may become an outstanding steward of God's gifts and goods, and that I may be a voice for justice and peace in this world.

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