

19<sup>th</sup> Sunday- C 2010  
Deacon Pat Hall

*Wisdom 18:6-9; Hebrews 11:1-2, 8-19; Luke 12:32-48*

*Homilies are vehicles for breaking open the Word of God. First read the Sunday readings at <http://www.usccb.org/nab/080810.shtml>.*

On your mark...get set...

Are you ready? And for what are you ready?

Luke talks about the returning master. His vigilant and faithful steward will be given all. And as if the parable is not explicit enough, Jesus said, "You also must be prepared, for at an hour you do not expect, the Son of Man will come." This is the second coming of Christ. We profess in creed that "He will come again to judge the living and the dead."

In the Gospel of Matthew it is made clear that on that day the Son of Man will separate the sheep from the goats. He will tell the sheep "Come, inherit the kingdom prepared for you. Whatever you did for one of these least brothers of mine, you did for me." He will say to the goats, "Depart from me, you accursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels." (Mt 25:31-46)

These are pretty sobering words. There is a lot of preaching and conjecture in the Christian world about that future Day of Judgment. People counter back and forth about whether or not we find salvation by our works or by God's grace. New Christian denominations arise from the splitting opinions about the divine nature of justice and mercy, salvation and damnation. There is a fair amount of anxiety among people about it. I mean were talking about eternal bliss or what the metaphor "eternal fire" describes. Whatever it describes it can't be good.

And yet I would like to relieve you from that anxiety and fear about that future day. I'd rather you be anxious about today. You see, that future kingdom has already been established. Our Catechism claims that "we are already at 'the last hour'. (1 Jn 2: 18) Already the final age of the world is with us, and the renewal of the world is irrevocably underway." (CCC 670)

So I am changing the question from are you ready for Judgment Day to: are you ready for today?

The master's steward gives us a clue about what being ready for today is about. The steward received from the master's resources and provided for those in his care. He demonstrates receiving and giving. You have heard that it is "more blessed to give than to receive" (Acts 20:35) And yet, what can one give that hasn't been first received?

When I was a cop a couple years into my career, I received a surprise gift from my Aunt Dorothy. It was my grandfather's deputy sheriff's badge. It was a surprise because I never knew that my grampa was ever a deputy. I had only known him as a copper miner from up in the Keweenaw Peninsula. She told me that when the Depression closed the mines, that Grampa did what he could to provide for his family. Becoming a deputy was not his chosen profession. He had been a miner since the age of 12 back in 19<sup>th</sup> Century England...a kind of Oliver Twist character...and had attained success in becoming an American mining captain. But the Depression ended that. He took what he received, and as a man of faith, he provided and shared in the best way he could, even setting up a small chicken farm on the side. My aunt gave me that story along with the badge set for display in a shadow box.

A number of years later, my own parents were moving out of state. It was for their ultimate good, but not without some separation pangs for my dad, as we're pretty close. Well, I took that shadow box and added my patrolman's badge to it. My dad has that shadow box of his father's and his son's badges hanging on his bedroom wall.

For me, that badge represents my ultimate dream of going to college and becoming a police officer. I was able to achieve that dream built on the labors of my grandfather and my father. My father worked in the foundries of Detroit after World War II to provide for his family. But you see his dream vocation was to have been a chicken farmer, the way he helped Grampa. But he took what he received and shared as best he could. He looks at that shadow box and sees the joined symbols of his father's sacrifice and his son's dream. My dad has a taste of God's bliss today. When I visit and see that shadow box on his wall, I can taste God's joy ever so much more than having it hang on my own wall. We are talking about experiencing the very presence of God and all I'm talking about is a couple pieces of tin. In what ways do you see God manifesting his presence, his giving and receiving in your life?

I am continuing to live that dream as I serve you at St. Tom's. There is nothing I share with you that I haven't received first. I have received so much blessing, that I am challenged to share in kind. "Much will be required of the person entrusted with much, and still more will be demanded of the person entrusted with more."

Yet this is such a wonderful place to receive and give. I don't have to be anxious about that future Judgment Day. I don't have to be anxious about my relationship with God today. I am enjoying the receiving and giving of God's love. I taste the kingdom that is here with hopeful anticipation of its fulfillment.

Today, choose to participate in the flow of receiving God's gifts and sharing them with others. It is from others through whom you likely received God's gifts. God models this love in the Trinity in the giving and receiving of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. We might not be able to explain it, but we can jump in and share it.

Come to his table and receive. Join together and then go forth to share in his kingdom, today.