

REVEREND MONSIGNOR RICHARD E. MARCHESE
THE TABLET, SEPTEMBER 23, 2007
25TH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

Amos 8:4-7
1 Timothy 2:1-8
Luke 16:1-13



The Gospel of today presents us with a parable comprising a series of characters who in their own way are manipulative and out for their own particular interests. The steward who cares for his master's estate had cheated his lord. The debtors owed rent. Even the master himself seemed not to be so surprised at the machinations of the steward, but rather praised him for being so enterprising. Each of the individuals involved were contriving and somewhat selfish, especially the steward who was looking toward being cared for when he would be jobless.

The Lord speaks to us about trustworthiness. When God puts someone or something into our care, He expects that we will act prudently and wisely. The time spent in doing so is commendable, as Jesus points out. But there must always be accountability for what we are about. This is a reality that is hard to grasp for many in today's world. A misconceived notion of our own personal freedom has left us with an improper understanding of what it means to give an account to someone who is higher in authority than we are.

But to whom is the master of all this accountable? To whom does he answer? There is always a higher authority until we reach the maximum level of God Himself. The saying goes that the higher one rises, the more alone one finds oneself. Eventually there comes a point when it is only that person and God. Unfortunately many in authority sometimes concentrate so much on the people who are responsible to them that they tend to fail to give proper time and attention to the one before whom they ultimately stand. Sometimes the demands of administration of others leaves us unmindful of the *real person in authority*. Who we are is really who we are before God. It is to Him alone that we must give the true and final account. At that point in time there are no popularity poles. Only truth itself can judge us. This is the real accountability.

Whether we are masters or stewards or debtors in today's world, each and every one of us Christians has the primary obligation to answer the call to sanctity. While hoping never to neglect the needs of our brothers and sisters around us, we sometimes get so caught up in the intricacies of our human relations that we forget that the first responsibility we have is to God Himself. The busy-ness of daily existence has made our lives so complex and complicated that the time spent on the things of this world has blinded us to really seeing and appreciating what it is all about. The world will never be redeemed by our clever machinations. All the plans and projects we seem to think are so important fade in the light of God's wisdom.

God wants us for Himself. He is not so much concerned about our actions as He is first about our spirit. He commends us not so much for what we do or seem to accomplish, but more for who we are. We Catholic Christians, therefore, must always be mindful of this as a Church striving to a greater consciousness of our commitment to God and to His people. Consequently, this Church, ever in need of renewal, is first and foremost in need of a new spirit which in turn gives life to the world. Whatever the course of our relationships with others, and whatever time is consumed in these endeavors must essentially revolve around what is first and foremost a deepening and enlivening of the life within us. And that is God's work.