

XXV SUNDAY (SEP. 19, 2010): AMOS 8: 4-7; I TIM. 2: 1-8; LUKE 16: 1-13

One stormy night many years ago an elderly couple entered the lobby of a small hotel and asked for a room. The clerk explained that because there were three conventions in town, the hotel was filled. He added, "But I can't send a nice couple like you out in the rain at 1 o'clock in the morning. Would you be willing to sleep in my room?" The couple hesitated, but the clerk insisted. The next morning when the man paid his bill, he told the clerk, "You're the kind of manager who should be the boss of the best hotel in the United States . Maybe someday I'll build one for you." The clerk smiled, amused by the older man's "little joke." A few years passed. Then one day the clerk received a letter from the elderly man recalling that stormy night and asking him to come to New York for a visit. A round-trip ticket was enclosed. When the clerk arrived, his host took him to the corner of 5th Avenue and 34th Street , where a grand new building stood. "That," explained the elderly man, "is the hotel I have just built for you to manage." "You must be joking," the clerk said. "I most assuredly am not," came the reply. "Who--who are you?" stammered the clerk. The man answered, "My name is William Waldorf Astor." That hotel was the original Waldorf-Astoria, one of the most magnificent hotels in New York . The young clerk who became its first manager was George C. Boldt. The story reinforces today's gospel message: blessings come from prudent action resulting from shrewd thinking.

Today's gospel challenges us to use our blessings -- time, talents, health and wealth -- wisely and shrewdly so that they will count for our good in eternity. We are on the right road only if we use our earthly wealth to attain our heavenly goal. Jesus reminds us that earthly resources will eventually run out. Hence, our material possessions should be used for the good of others, to cement friendships wherein lie the real and permanent values of life. This can be done in two ways. The right use of wealth, according to Jesus in the Gospel of Luke, is to help the poor, the hungry, and the starving. That is the way that we make friends with God and please God according to this text. There are many people in our parish who live a life of generosity. There are many people in the Catholic Church who understand that God has given us money so that we can be generous to the needy, the poor and the starving. Thus, many of us are making wise investments for the future.

He calls us to faithfulness in little things because most of our life is made up of seemingly small opportunities to do good. Few of us can hope to "save the world." Still, we can conduct our business in honesty, tutor a child, visit a person in a nursing home, or help a neighbor in distress and make a difference in his or her life. Then our Lord will welcome us with the words: *"Well done, my good and faithful servant. Since you were faithful in small matters, I will give you great responsibilities. Come, share your master's joy."* Mt. 25:21.

Often we get so caught up in our work that we ignore the little things of life. But let us not ignore these little matters -- things like dropping someone an encouraging note or extending people a simple, "Thank you." Similarly, we ought to take time out of our workday to help others in small things. As Saint John Chrysostom said, "Faithfulness in little things is a big thing." We may not be able to reach millions of people all over the world by satellite as famous talk show hosts or televangelists do. But in our own part of the world we can faithfully do little things to point people toward Jesus. Our future opportunities in the eternal service of God largely depend on our stewardship in handling the little opportunities we have had on earth. As Blessed Mother Teresa used to recommend, "Do little things with great love."