

# National Vocation Awareness Week 2017

## Homily Points

### **Sunday, November 5, 31<sup>st</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time**

Mal 1:14B-2:2B, 8-10; Ps 131:1, 2, 3; 1 Thes 2:7B-9, 13; Mt 23:1-12

St. Juan Diego became a Catholic convert when the seeds of Christianity were being planted for the first time in Mexico. He saw the difference between a church people who really serve God and neighbor, and those who did not, and he also experienced those who were at times confused. It was a time when many people were hurting, and many people were hungry. They weren't sure where to turn, but God was aware of this, and God had a plan. God sent our Mother, Our Lady of Guadalupe, to Juan Diego and his people. She chose Juan, not because he was important, but because he was humble. He had a heart that was open to love and service. God had given Juan Diego these gifts in advance. He knew what Our Lady would one day ask of her little Juan, and so he prepared Juan in the best way possible to accept the mission that Mary wanted Juan Diego to fulfill.

Juan Diego was asked to be the messenger of Our Lady of Guadalupe. He had many reasons to not do it: he was a commoner even among the Indians, he was not believed, he was mocked, and he had a sick uncle who was dying. Yet, he decided to respond to the call and to trust. His heart that God had prepared would not be calm and fulfilled until he followed God's plan, which Mary perfectly offered to Juan Diego. It was difficult. He even tried to take a different route one day so he would not see Mary on the way. But his heart could not escape its destiny. So he humbly said "yes." Since he trusted in the midst of trials, it led to one of the greatest conversions of people in the history of Christianity. Juan Diego understood the meaning of the phrase "my heart is not proud" from today's psalm. He found great peace by placing his trust completely in God.

God chooses each of us to work with him in a unique way to share the Gospel and work for the coming of his kingdom. Sometimes we too are afraid to do what God is asking of us. But fear never comes from God. God always invites us with love. God's plan is attractive. God has created each of our hearts perfectly to follow the plan he has also laid out for our lives. Do not be afraid of your call. God can use it in incredible ways. And this is the truest way to find happiness and peace for our lives.

We think that serving God will mean giving up something of ourselves, losing something. But the opposite is actually true. It is when we serve the Church, the family of God, the way in which God is asking us to do so, that we find who we truly are, because then we have become the person God has created us to be. Live the greatest adventure of your life; say yes to God!

Questions:

What are my fears when I hear God's call?

Do I bring those fears to God and let Him love me there?

## 5 de noviembre, Domingo Trigésimo Primero del Tiempo Ordinario

Mal 1:14b—2:2b, 8-10; Ps 131:1, 2, 2; 1 Tes 2:7b-9, 13; Mt 23:1-12

San Juan Diego se convirtió al catolicismo cuando las semillas del cristianismo estaban siendo plantadas por primera vez en México. Pudo distinguir la diferencia entre las personas de Iglesia que de verdad sirven a Dios y al prójimo y los que no lo hacen y también tuvo la experiencia de quienes a veces andaban confundidos. Era un tiempo en que muchas personas estaban sufriendo y muchas pasaban hambre. No estaban seguros de a quién acudir, pero Dios sabía esto y tenía un plan. Dios envió a nuestra Madre, Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe, a Juan Diego y a su pueblo. Escogió a Juan, no porque fuera importante, sino porque era humilde. Juan tenía un corazón abierto al amor y al servicio. Dios le había dado a Juan Diego estos dones por adelantado. Sabía lo que algún día Nuestra Señora le pediría a su pequeño Juan, y lo preparó de la mejor manera posible para aceptar la misión que María quería que Juan Diego cumpliera.

A Juan Diego se le pidió ser mensajero de Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe. Él tenía muchas razones para no hacerlo: era un hombre del pueblo e, incluso entre los indígenas, no tenía credibilidad, se burlaban de él, y además tenía un tío enfermo a punto de morir. Y sin embargo, decidió responder a la llamada y confiar. Su corazón, que Dios había preparado, no estaría tranquilo y realizado a no ser que siguiera el plan de Dios, que María le había ofrecido perfectamente. Era muy difícil: él incluso trató un día de ir por un camino distinto para no encontrarse con María. Pero su corazón no podía escaparse de su destino. Así que humildemente dijo "sí". Su confianza en medio de las dificultades condujo a una de las mayores conversiones de un pueblo en la historia del cristianismo. Juan Diego comprendió el significado de "mi corazón no es altanero" del salmo de hoy. Encontró una gran paz en poner toda su confianza en Dios.

Dios nos escoge a cada uno de nosotros de manera singular para compartir el Evangelio y trabajar para la venida de su Reino. A veces nosotros también tenemos miedo de hacer lo que Dios nos está pidiendo. Pero el temor nunca viene de Dios. Dios siempre nos invita con amor. El plan de Dios es atractivo. Dios ha creado cada uno de nuestros corazones para seguir perfectamente el plan que ha diseñado para cada una de nuestras vidas. No tengan miedo de su llamado. Dios lo puede usar de maneras increíbles. Y es la manera más verdadera de encontrar la felicidad y la paz en nuestras vidas.

Pensamos que servir a Dios significará renunciar a algo de nosotros mismos, perder algo. Pero, de hecho, la verdad es que es al contrario. Es cuando servimos a la Iglesia, la familia de Dios, en el modo en que Dios nos pide que lo hagamos, cuando encontramos quiénes somos de verdad, porque entonces nos habremos convertido en la persona para la que Dios nos creó. Vive la mayor aventura de tu vida; ¡Di sí a Dios!

Preguntas:

¿Cuáles son mis temores cuando escucho la llamada de Dios?

¿Llevo esos temores a Dios y le dejo que me ame ahí donde estoy?

## **Monday, November 6, 31<sup>st</sup> Week of Ordinary Time**

Rom 11:29-36; Ps 69:30-31, 33-34, 36; Lk 14:12-14

“You are cordially invited...” These words can ignite great excitement or dread, depending on what follows. When I get an invitation from a friend to join her for dinner or to go see a movie, I have something to look forward to that can brighten my whole day. An invitation from the I.R.S. to bring in my last year’s income tax filing for review can make me break out in a cold sweat!

As we begin this National Week of Prayer for Vocations, the scripture describes that one way of looking at a vocation is to see it as an invitation from God. It is an invitation to discover the gifts that he has given us and the possible way we can put those gifts to work for his glory. God invites us to draw near to him not so he can get something from us but that he can gift us with those graces that will bring us complete joy.

In today’s Gospel passage Jesus challenges his host, along with all the other invited guests at this banquet, to look at things from God’s perspective. Jesus knows that some people, maybe even his host that evening, do nice things to get nice things in return. Maybe they are motivated by the need to “appear” generous and kind. Or perhaps they want to move up the social ladder by hanging with the right crowd. None of this enters into God’s way of thinking or acting. God invites us to draw near to him not so that he can take from us but so he can shower us with his love.

St. Paul reminds us in the first reading that everything is through him, from him and for him. God lacks nothing so he needs nothing from us. His desire is to give and give and give. One of the ways he shows this generosity is pouring into each of us his gifts and then calling us to that most perfect way of using them that will give him glory and us immense joy.

He did this with the chosen people of Israel. God gave them the gift of being his own special people. He became present to them in a way that no other people had ever experienced a god. He delivered them out of slavery, cared for their every need, led them to a promised land and promised to remain always with them. In return he asked for nothing but that they should

accept his love and live by the law that would secure justice, peace and security for them always. Unfortunately, this called and chosen people did not always respond to God's generous gift of himself; but that has never stopped him from loving them.

In our lives God continues to invite. In fact, St. Paul again reminds us that God's gifts and his call are irrevocable. Upon each of us God has poured out gifts in a special and unique way; and, according to those gifts, he has called us to a way of life (a vocation) that will fulfill and complete us. What are the gifts God has given to you? How is he inviting you to use and share them with others? Don't be afraid to ask those questions. Remember: God is not looking to get anything from you but to draw you close so that he can overwhelm you with his generosity. "You are cordially invited..."

## **6 de noviembre, Lunes 31ª Semana del Tiempo Ordinario**

Rom 11:29-36; Ps 69:30-31, 33-34, 36; Lk 14:12-14

"Usted está cordialmente invitado ..." Estas palabras pueden encender gran emoción o temor, dependiendo de lo que sigue. Cuando recibo una invitación de un amigo para reunirme con él para cenar o para salir al cine, se me llena el corazón con la anticipación de pasar un tiempo alegre con alguien que me quiere. ¡Una invitación de la I.R.S. para presentar la declaración de impuestos del año pasado para hacer una "revisión" puede provocarme un sudor frío!

Al comenzar esta Semana Nacional de Oración por las Vocaciones, la Escritura describe que una forma de mirar una vocación es verla como una invitación de Dios. Es una invitación a descubrir los dones que nos ha dado y la forma posible de poner esos dones a trabajar para su gloria. Dios nos invita a acercarnos a él, no para que él pueda obtener algo de nosotros, sino para que pueda regalarnos esas gracias que nos traerán alegría total.

En el pasaje del Evangelio de hoy, Jesús desafía al fariseo, junto con todos los invitados de este banquete, a mirar las cosas desde la perspectiva de Dios. Jesús sabe que algunas personas, tal vez incluso su anfitrión esa noche, hacen cosas agradables para conseguir cosas buenas a cambio. Quizás están motivados por la necesidad de "aparecer" generosos y amables. O tal vez quieren subir socialmente por asociarse con los "mero meros". Nada de esto entra en la manera de pensar o de actuar de Dios. Dios nos invita a acercarnos a él, no para que nos pueda quitar, sino para que nos pueda regalar su amor.

San Pablo nos recuerda en la primera lectura que todo es por medio de él, de él y para él. Dios no carece de nada y no necesita nada de nosotros. Su deseo es dar y dar y dar. Una de las maneras en que muestra esta generosidad es verter en cada uno de nosotros sus dones y luego llamarnos a esa forma más perfecta de usarlos que le dará gloria y nos gozará inmensamente.

Hizo esto con el pueblo elegido de Israel. Dios les dio el don de ser su propia gente especial. Se hizo presente a ellos de una manera en que ningún otro pueblo había experimentado un dios

jamás. Los libró de la esclavitud, cuidó de todas sus necesidades, los condujo a una tierra prometida y prometió permanecer siempre con ellos. A cambio, no pidió nada más que aceptar su amor y vivir por la ley que garantizara la justicia, la paz y la seguridad para siempre. Desafortunadamente, este pueblo llamado y elegido no siempre respondió al don generoso de un Dios que ofrece a sí mismo; pero eso nunca le ha impedido continuar amarlos.

En nuestras vidas Dios continúa invitando. De hecho, san Pablo nos recuerda de nuevo que los dones de Dios y su llamado son irrevocables. Sobre cada uno de nosotros Dios ha derramado dones de una manera especial y única; y, de acuerdo con esos dones, nos ha llamado a un modo de vida (una vocación) que nos cumplirá y nos completará. ¿Cuáles son los dones que Dios te ha dado? ¿Cómo te invita a usarlos y compartirlos con otros? No tengas miedo de hacer esas preguntas. Recuerda: Dios no está buscando obtener nada de ti, sino acercarte para que pueda cubrirte con su generosidad. "Estás cordialmente invitado..."

## **Tuesday, November 7, 31<sup>st</sup> Week of Ordinary Time**

Rom 12:5-16AB; Ps 131:1BCDE, 2, 3; Lk 14:15-24

When we think of Heaven, how often though do we think of it as a great banquet, or a great celebration which we've been invited to? Today's gospel invites us to cultivate this image in our hearts. The Father is preparing an amazing banquet to which each of us has been invited. In order to share in this banquet though, it's not simply enough for us just to show up, we must be intentional about how we live, and we must constantly try to prepare ourselves. This preparation should begin with a spirit of thanksgiving, thanking God for our lives, thanking God for the gifts he's given us, and thanking God that he's drawn us into the life of the Church. Then we need to move from this into a spirit of pondering and asking God what our role is to be in preparing for the banquet. As St. Paul makes clear in today's first reading from the Letter to the Romans, not only are we all members of the body of Christ by the grace of our baptism, but by this grace we are united to each other, and by this grace we are given gifts which are intended to be placed at the service of each other.

This image of unity and of life should really lead us to examine how God is calling us to contribute to the flourishing of the body of Christ. Faced with this mission we might be caught up with a sense of inadequacy or with fear of what God might be asking of us. We might feel a temptation to turn away from the banquet toward something that's easier or more convenient, but if we desire to find true joy and fulfillment, it comes from turning towards the Father and not away from Him. Preparing for the banquet and fulfilling our vocation is not something that we can do or should do alone. We must pray for and encourage each other, and as we discover and use the gifts God has given us, we'll also discover how our own gifts call out the gifts of others and strengthen the body as a whole. Today God calls you to get ready for the feast, will you accept His invitation, or will you allow your hesitation to leave you unfulfilled and hungry?

Is there someone in your life who needs your encouragement to accept God's invitation to follow him more closely?

Questions:

What are the gifts God has given me as a member of the body of Christ?

How do I think God is inviting me to use these gifts to prepare for the great feast of Heaven?

## **7 martes de noviembre, Lunes 31<sup>a</sup> Semana del Tiempo Ordinario**

Rom 12:5-16AB; Ps 131:1BCDE, 2, 3; Lk 14:15-24

Cuando pensamos en el paraíso, ¿cuántas veces se nos viene a la mente la imagen de una gran fiesta o gran celebración a la cual hemos sido invitados? El evangelio de hoy nos invita a cultivar esta imagen en nuestros corazones. El Padre está preparando un delicioso banquete al cual todos hemos sido invitados. Para prepararnos a compartir este banquete no basta simplemente con llegar al lugar: tenemos que prepararnos con anticipación en la manera que vivimos. Esta preparación debería comenzar por cultivar un espíritu de agradecimiento, dándole gracias a Dios por nuestra vida, dándole gracias por los dones que nos ha dado, y dándole gracias porque nos ha unido a la vida de su Iglesia. Después tenemos que seguir por un espíritu de reflexión, pidiéndole a Dios que nos ayude a ver el papel que tenemos en preparar este banquete. Como san Pablo deja claro en la primera lectura de hoy de su carta a los romanos, no sólo somos miembros del Cuerpo de Cristo por la gracia de nuestro Bautismo: por medio de esta gracia estamos unidos y por medio de esta gracia hemos recibido dones que se nos han dado para usarlos al servicio de otros.

Esta imagen de unión y de la vida nos debería mover a examinar cómo es que Dios nos está invitando a contribuir a fortalecer el cuerpo de Cristo. Cuando nos encontramos con esta misión tal vez nos sintamos un poco indignos o sintamos miedo a lo que Dios puede estar pidiendo de nosotros. Tal vez sintamos la tentación de apartarnos del banquete y de dirigirnos hacia algo que es más fácil o conveniente. Pero si deseamos encontrar alegría verdadera y si deseamos vivir una vida que vale la pena, esto sólo se nos puede dar cuando nos dirigimos hacia el Padre, en lugar de alejarnos de él. Prepararnos para el banquete y cumplir nuestra vocación no es algo que podamos hacer a solas. Debemos orar los unos por los otros y animar a cada persona en su camino hacia Dios. A medida que descubrimos y usamos los dones que Dios nos ha dado, también descubrimos cómo nuestros dones hacen brotar los dones de otros y fortalecen al Cuerpo de Cristo. Hoy Dios te llama a prepararte para el banquete: ¿aceptarás su invitación, o permitirás que tu miedo y tus dudas te dejen insatisfecho y con hambre? ¿Hay alguien en tu entorno que necesite tu ánimo y acompañamiento para aceptar la invitación de Dios a seguirle más cercanamente?

Preguntas:

¿Cuáles son los dones que Dios me ha dado como miembro del cuerpo de Cristo?

¿Cómo creo que Dios me está invitando a usar estos dones para preparar el banquete celestial?

## **Wednesday, November 8, 31<sup>st</sup> Week of Ordinary Time**

Rom 13:8-10; Ps 112:1B-2, 4-5, 9, Lk 14:25-33

Jesus doesn't mince words in today's Gospel. If we truly want to be his disciples, he demands that we love him above everything else. To "hate" father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, means not to give them ultimate importance in our life. Jesus says we must hate even our own lives—meaning that we cannot place our own comfort or the pursuit of our own goals before our pursuit of his will. When it comes to discerning our vocation in life, this is the first principle to keep in mind—that we must love God and seek His will first, instead of first choosing what we want. Whether it is in marriage, where a person leaves their own family to form a new one with their spouse, or in a celibate vocation, where one gives up having a family of their own in order to belong totally to the Lord, all of us will have to give even good things like family relationships a secondary importance in order to truly follow God's will. What we sometimes forget is that the invitation of Jesus today challenges us to love ourselves and our families more, not less. When we place God above all others, then we begin to see ourselves and others in God's eyes, and we love them more as God loves them. This is the gift that accompanies the challenge.

Then we can ask the question of how God wants us to do that. Whether He calls us to marriage, a generous single life, or the priesthood or consecrated life, our vocation will always be founded in loving God more than anything else, and thus directing all of our actions and all of our love to Him. And in imitation of our Lord, we will pour ourselves out in generous, self-forgetful love of others. If we strive to do this, we find the greatest joy and peace that is possible this side of heaven. Jesus always gives us more than he asks of us. We always come out ahead when we give everything to Jesus!

Jesus also encourages us to stop and "count the cost" of being his disciple. It will indeed involve sacrifice. There is no genuine Christian vocation without sacrifice, because love always means sacrifice. But we could also apply Jesus' words in a different way and ask ourselves, what is the cost of living life for myself alone? If we have the eyes to see, we will realize that whatever momentary pleasures may come from a life of self-indulgence, it will ultimately bring us only misery. By contrast, the cost of following Jesus and giving myself away generously for love of him is far outweighed by the glory that he promises to those who take up their cross and follow him. As the psalmist proclaims, "Blessed the man who is gracious.... his horn shall be exalted in glory."

So what is your life about? What do you love more than anything else? If it's not Jesus, what "possessions" do you need to renounce?

Do you believe that it is worth it to pour yourself out in generous love of others? Are you willing to go wherever Jesus asks, no matter what it costs? Do you believe that he can reward you a hundredfold?

## **8 de noviembre, Miércoles de la Semana 31 del Tiempo Ordinario**

Rom 13:8-10; Ps 112:1B-2, 4-5, 9, Lk 14:25-33

Jesús no se anda con rodeos en el evangelio de hoy. Si de verdad queremos ser sus discípulos, nos exige que le amemos sobre todas las cosas. "Odiar" a padre y madre, esposa e hijos, hermanos y hermanas no significa que no les demos una enorme importancia en nuestra vida. Jesús dice que debemos odiar incluso nuestras propias vidas—lo que significa que no podemos colocar nuestra propia comodidad o el seguimiento de nuestras propias metas por encima del seguimiento de su voluntad. Cuando se trata de discernir nuestra vocación en la vida, éste es el primer principio a considerar—que primero tenemos que amar a Dios y hacer su voluntad, en lugar de primero escoger lo que queremos. Tanto si es en el matrimonio, en que una persona deja a su propia familia para crear una nueva con su cónyuge, o en una vocación al celibato, en la persona renuncia a tener su propia familia para pertenecer totalmente al Señor, todos nosotros tendremos que relegar a segundo lugar incluso cosas buenas para seguir verdaderamente la voluntad de Dios. Lo que a veces se nos olvida es que la invitación de Jesús hoy nos desafía a amarnos a nosotros mismos y a nuestras familias más, no menos. Cuando ponemos a Dios sobre todo lo demás, empezamos a vernos a nosotros mismos y a los demás con los ojos de Dios, y amamos más, como Dios los ama. Éste es el don que acompaña al desafío.

Entonces, nos podemos hacer la pregunta de cómo es que Dios quiere que hagamos eso. Tanto si nos llama al matrimonio, a una vida soltera generosa, o al sacerdocio o la vida consagrada, nuestra vocación siempre estará fundamentada en amar a Dios sobre todas las cosas y, por tanto, a dirigir todas nuestras acciones y todo nuestro amor hacia él. E, imitando a nuestro Señor, nos entregaremos en un amor generoso y abnegado hacia los demás. Si nos esforzamos por hacer esto, encontraremos la mayor alegría y paz posibles de este lado del cielo. Jesús siempre nos da más de lo que pide de nosotros. ¡Siempre salimos ganando si le entregamos todo a Jesús!

Jesús también nos anima a detenernos y calcular "el precio" de ser su discípulo. Ciertamente implicará sacrificio. No hay vocación cristiana genuina sin sacrificio, porque el amor siempre significa sacrificio. Pero también podemos aplicar las palabras de Jesús de manera diferente y preguntarnos, ¿cuál sería el precio de vivir mi vida para mí mismo solamente? Si tenemos ojos para ver, nos daremos cuenta de que, cualquier placer momentáneo que pueda venirnos de



una vida de capricho, al final sólo nos conducirá a la tristeza. En contraste, el precio de seguir a Jesús y de entregarme generosamente por amor a él queda más que compensado por la gloria que promete a quienes toman su cruz y le siguen. Como proclama el salmista: “Bendito el hombre que es generoso...será exaltado en gloria”.

Así que, ¿de qué trata tu vida? ¿qué amas por encima de cualquier otra cosa? Si no es Jesús, ¿a qué “posesiones” deberías renunciar?

¿Crees que merece la pena entregarte en amor generoso por los demás? ¿Estás dispuesto(a) a ir dondequiera que Jesús te pida, sin importar el precio? ¿Crees que te puede recompensar al cien por uno?

## **Thursday, November 9, Feast of the Dedication of the Lateran Basilica**

[Ez 47:1-2, 8-9, 12; Ps 46:2-3, 5-6, 8-9; 1 Cor 3:9C-11, 16-17; Jn 2:13-22](#)

We have a God who is madly in love with us. Not just all of us, but each one of us personally. He wants to be so intimately united with each of us that he has created a temple in each one of us where he dwells. St. Paul reminds us that the Church is the “temple of the Holy Spirit.” Each Christian, through Baptism, Confirmation, and the Eucharist is also a temple of the Spirit. This is a great reminder for us when we feel alone or helpless. God himself dwells in each one of us. It is good for us to remember this every day, for this knowledge is a great source of courage and strength regardless of what our day brings us.

God is madly in love with us. He becomes jealous when in sin we turn away from him. He wants to cleanse us, just as Jesus wanted to cleanse the temple in today's gospel reading. When we are in sin God wants to cleanse our soul gently, through the sacrament of Confession whereby we humbly receive his grace and mercy.

God is madly in love with us. He only wants the best for us. His plan for our life, the vocation that God has been preparing for us our entire lives, is the best plan for our lives, because it is God's plan for us. Whether we have already discovered our vocation to marriage, priesthood, or the consecrated life – or if we are still searching for God's plan - God has untold graces in store for us to receive through our vocation. It is because of his love that he offers to each of us a vocation that is custom tailored to fit each of our lives. God also desires the best for the people whom we love. Praying that those whom we love would have the strength to follow God's plan for their lives, and supporting them in doing so, is one of the greatest gifts we can give to them.

God is madly in love with us. But the one thing God won't do is force us to love him in return. If he did it would no longer be love. It would be beneath our dignity and beneath his dignity as well. Regardless of where you are in life right now, offer your love to God in the silence of your heart. Ask him to give you the strength you need to make wise choices today, and the strength

to follow his plan for your life. Ask him how you can support those whom you love in following God's plan for their lives. It is your surest path to ultimate happiness, the happiness that can only come from a God who is madly in love with you.

## **Friday, November 10, Memorial of Saint Leo the Great**

Rom 15:14-21; Ps 98:1, 2-3AB, 3CD-4; Lk 16:1-8

Our motivations are complex things. If we are inspired by love to do something for another person we can often push beyond what we think we can do. Any parent who has sacrificed for a son or daughter can testify to the truth of this statement. Sometimes fear can inspire us as well. It can trigger a response from us that leads to self-preservation. We see an example of this in today's gospel. The dishonest steward seems to be motivated by his fear. He is afraid of poverty, and in his pride also fears begging. His fear motivates him to act prudently, or, as translated by some biblical scholars, shrewdly. The meaning is that the steward is astute or cunning. He knows what is coming, and acts to prepare for the future. Jesus laments that the "children of light" are not as cunning, not as astute, as those who are "of this world."

What does it mean for us as disciples of Jesus Christ to be prudent? How can we be clever? It is interesting to consider the following: had the dishonest steward spent as much energy and wisdom toward being an honest steward then he would not have gotten into this mess in the first place. He could have kept his position of prominence and prestige – precisely what his pride was trying to protect! He could have cultivated a good relationship with his master through hard work and honesty. A life of virtue and pursuit of goodness is the path that Jesus calls his disciples to follow. We don't pursue virtue because we want to prove anything to God. Rather, it is because we know of God's love and mercy in our lives that we respond with a life of virtue. It is our way of responding to the incredible gift of salvation that Jesus offers to us. In short, it means that we are motivated by our love of God.

To be clever or prudent for the disciple of Jesus Christ ultimately means that we know we can do very little on our own. When we recognize that all we have is a gift from God – our talents, our intelligence, even our motivation, then we can be inspired to use those gifts to serve God. God calls some to use these gifts in married life, some in consecrated single life, and some in ordained ministry. We need not fear anything; rather, in prudence we place our trust in the loving God who patiently waits for us at every moment. When we place our gifts at God's service he does amazing things through us, and offers joy unlike anything the world can give.

In this Eucharistic celebration, we receive the source of our strength, the love and mercy of the one who knows all of our needs and provides for them. Our response is to offer ourselves to the Lord in love. We see this exemplified in the life of St. Paul, who "will not dare to speak of anything except what Christ has accomplished through me." Rather than a servant who is motivated by fear, recognize your dignity as a son or daughter who is completely loved and

accepted, and act accordingly. It is when we act this way that we show ourselves to be true “children of the light.”

## **Saturday, November 11, Memorial of Saint Martin of Tours**

Rom 16:3-9, 16, 22-27; Ps 145:2-3, 4-5, 10-11; Lk 16:9-15

We all want to be secure in life. Our American work ethic teaches us that if we work hard then we will be rewarded. The Catechism of the Catholic Church also sees moral value in a strong work ethic, teaching that “human work proceeds directly from persons created in the image of God and called to prolong the work of creation by subduing the earth, both with and for one another.” (CCC #2427). Work allows us to provide for ourselves and our family, and contribute to the good of the human community. As is often the case though, we can overdo it. When the pursuit of a paycheck becomes an obsession with getting ahead and acquiring more possessions, then it is time for us to do a reality check in our lives. Are we working to build up the dignity of the human person – meaning the dignity of ourselves and others? Or have we become obsessed with our work, and have little time left for God and others? When our life is out of balance our relationships can suffer as a result, and our values can become distorted. The same can be said for other pursuits in life – we can become obsessed with school, with athletics, or with hobbies. They all have a legitimate place in our lives, and they can all contribute to a happy fulfilled life. The key is balance. Jesus reminds us that no one can “serve two masters.” So, the question becomes, “who are we serving?”

For St. Martin of Tours, whose feast day we celebrate today, the answer to this question clearly became Jesus Christ. He left his occupation as a Roman soldier to dedicate his life to the service of Jesus Christ and the Church. Not all of us are called to do what Martin did, but regardless of where you are in life it is always good to ask God how you can be the best at what God is calling you to do. Not the best in terms of how much money you make or professional success you achieve, but the best in the way you use what God has given you in a balanced way. We are all called to be co-workers with Christ according to our individual vocations, as St. Paul reminds the Romans, “Brothers and sisters: Greet Prisca and Aquila, my co-workers in Christ Jesus.” The goal that will bring us joy and fulfillment is to be a trustworthy friend of Jesus - trustworthy in very small matters and also trustworthy in great ones.

God has given us gifts and talents to serve others and to glorify God. Our fulfillment, our happiness, is the greatest when we are living for others. It is good to ask ourselves from time to time, how much time and money do I contribute to others? If my basic needs are satisfied, at what point do I have enough? What is it that I am looking for in life? The exact response will be different for each one of us. But the overarching concern is the same. “Where your treasure is, there also is your heart” (Mt 6:21). Our hearts were made for love – love of God and love of others. When our hearts are rightly ordered, then we have found true happiness. It is then that

the words of Jesus in today's gospel will ring true, "you will be welcomed into eternal dwellings."