

Almsgiving and the Return of the Master (19th Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year C)

Wisdom 18:6-9—The Israelites Prepared for Passover Night

1. Passover Night: “was made known *beforehand* to our fathers” (18:6)
2. Passover Sacrifices: how did they prepare? They “offered sacrifices” (18:9)

Psalm 33—Waiting for the LORD

1. Deliverance: the LORD will “deliver their soul from death” (v. 19)

Hebrews 11:1-2, 8-19—Abraham’s Faith in Things Unseen

1. Faith: “the assurance of things hoped for” “the conviction of things unseen” (11:1)

Luke 12:32-48—Treasure in Heaven and Being Ready for the Master’s Return

1. Remnant: “little flock” will inherit the “kingdom” (12:32)
2. Almsgiving: “sell your possessions; and give alms” (12:33)
 - a. Alms: “alms” (Greek *eleēmosynē*) (12:33); cf. “mercy” (Greek *eleos*)
 - b. Eternal Purses: “that do not grow old”
 - c. Heavenly Treasure: “in the heavens that does not fail”
 - d. Heart: “Where your treasure (Greek *thēsauros*) is, there will your *heart* be”
4. The Return of the Master (12:35-38)
 - a. Loins: “girded”
 - b. Lamps: “burning”
 - c. Waiting: “for their master to come from the marriage feast” (12:36)
 - d. Awake: “Blessed are those... whom the master finds awake” (12:37)
5. Thief in the Night (12:39-40)
 - a. Thief: comes at unknown “hour”
 - b. Householder: would have been “awake”
 - c. Thief = “Son of man”; Householder = “You”

Almsgiving in Scripture

Store up almsgiving in your treasury,
and it will rescue you from all affliction (Sirach 29:12)

Give alms from your possessions... Do not turn your face away from any poor man, and the face of God will not be turned away from you. If you have many possessions, make your gift from them in proportion; if few, do not be afraid to give according to the little you have. *So you will be laying up a good treasure for yourself against the day of necessity.* For charity delivers from death and keeps you from entering the darkness; and for all who practice it charity is an excellent offering in the presence of the Most High. (Tobit 4:7-11)

The Mass Readings Explained

Give for alms those things which are within; and behold, *everything is clean for you*.
(Luke 11:41)

The Living Tradition

John Chrysostom: You honor this altar indeed, because it receives Christ's body [at the Eucharist]. But the poor man, who is himself the body of Christ, you treat with scorn, and when perishing, neglect. You can see this altar lying around everywhere, both in streets and in market places, and you can sacrifice upon it every hour; for on this too is sacrifice performed. (John Chrysostom, *Homilies on 2 Corinthians* 20; trans. Gary A. Anderson, *Charity*, p. 15; cf. *NPNF1* 12.374)

Questions for Discussion and Reflection (19th Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year C)

1. How did the Israelites prepare to be delivered from death on Passover night?

2. What is the Greek root for the word "almsgiving"? What does this reveal about how giving alms is an imitation of Christ?

3. Are you prepared for the return of the "Master"? What more can you do to be "ready" when he comes again?

For Further Study

1. Pablo Gadenz. *The Gospel of Luke*. Catholic Commentary on Sacred Scripture. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2018. Pp. 241
2. Gary A. Anderson, *Charity: The Place of the Poor in the Biblical Tradition* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2013), 54-55.