

# *Spend It All!*

## TWENTY-FIFTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

Year C  
September 19, 2010

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

### GATHERING<sup>1</sup>

*(Slips of paper, (one for each member) lettered with the names of various social service groups (e.g. Veteran's Hospital, Office of Migration and Refugee Services, Catholic Worker House, Alcoholics Anonymous and other local agencies/shelters) are arranged around an unlit candle in the gathering place.*

*If new members are joining the community, some time is taken for people to become acquainted and for newcomers to learn something about the history of the community. All share their hopes and expectations about being a part of a small church community.)*

Memories of summer and hints of fall swirl around us as we gather this week. We come together to reflect on our experience as stewards of God's gifts to us for the sake of his reign in our hearts and in our world.

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<sup>1</sup> **Special Note: Quest** suggests that the leader for this session takes particular note of the design for the Closing Prayer in this and subsequent units and the reflections offered on this approach to extended prayer in the Preface (cf. p.iii). Having become familiar with the design for Closing Prayer and the reflections in the Preface, it is suggested that the leader invite the community to review these materials and enter into some conversation about it all.

## OPENING PRAYER

*(The leader invites the community to a time of silent acknowledgement of God's presence. After a time of quiet, the prayer continues as follows.)*

Leader: The poor in spirit call out to me.

All: Blessed be their spirit; may they be filled with your light,  
O, God.

Leader: The poor in heart call out to me.

All: Blessed be their heart; may they be infused with your love,  
O, God.

Leader: The poor in mind call out to me.

All: Blessed be their mind; may they be comforted with your  
peace O, God.

Leader: The poor in body call out to me.

All: Blessed be their physical being; may they be wrapped in your  
loving arms, O, God.

*(A member of the community lights the candle and the leader prays as follows.)*

Leader: Yes, the poor call out to us. Blessed may we be to hear their  
call and be aware of their suffering. Let us lift them up to  
our God and be with them in heart and soul.

*(An instrumental selection from **MusicQuest** is played as the community dwells in silence.)*

## Focus Question

- ◆ What makes you rich? What makes you poor?

## SCRIPTURE SHARING AND REFLECTION

*(The scriptures are proclaimed aloud with a pause after each reading. Following a pause after the gospel reading, the facilitator invites members to mention a word, a phrase or an image from one of the readings that particularly struck them this week. Members then read over the commentary and consider the questions in silence for several minutes before entering into conversation.)*

### Commentary

A woman being interviewed about her dedication to taking care of HIV/AIDS children was asked about her hopes and dreams in life. She said simply, that when she died, she wanted to have spent everything she had! When she met her maker, she wanted to have used up totally and completely every gift with which God had blessed her life. She wasn't about consuming it all for herself, but rather about spending herself for others. Her story touches the heart of this week's scriptures.

In our hunger for material possessions, many of us have increased the size of our houses, so that we can accommodate more and more stuff. And what won't fit into our houses, we pay to protect in rental storage! At the same time, far too many people are finding their way to shelters these days because they have lost their jobs and homes. They suffer not only a material poverty, but an emotional and psychological poverty as well.

The lack of material goods is only one example of poverty. Spiritual poverty of spirit can express itself in a loneliness and depression of the soul. Poverty of relationships is often displayed these days in the brokenness of family life. Emotional poverty is experienced in the difficulty of making ourselves understood or heard in abusive situations.

Rather than focusing on the steward, a child of this world, it is perhaps more fruitful to focus on the call to the "the children of light" to be good stewards. If we are the children of light, how much more resourceful are we being called to be in using our gifts, not only for ourselves, but for the sake of others?

As prudent stewards of the light of Christ, we are called to extend ourselves to all of God's poor even the physically, spiritually or emotionally poor, as we lift them up in prayer to the One who "raises the lowly from the dust...to seat them with princes". (Psalm 11) Emptying ourselves for the sake of

others is the way we become good stewards of God's household.

## FAITH SHARING AND INTEGRATION<sup>1</sup>

- ◆ How does the word, phrase or image that struck you from this week's scriptures speak to your life or the life of the community, your family or your world these days?
- ◆ What kinds of poverty have you experienced in your life?
- ◆ How prudent a steward are you of the gifts and resources entrusted to you?
- ◆ To what extent are you *drawn* to or *repelled* by the poor/weak?
- ◆ In what ways do the poor/weak impact your life?
- ◆ Who has been a good steward in your life? What has he/she done for you?

## RESPONSE IN ACTION<sup>2</sup>

- ◆ Promote a parish tag sale, the proceeds of which to be given to people in the parish or community who have lost jobs or homes as a result of these difficult economic times.
- ◆ Be a more attentive steward of creation this week by reducing your use of water and electricity.
- ◆ Live a more mindful life in the week ahead. Eat less, walk more; talk less, listen more.
- ◆ Set aside twenty minutes some day this week for reflection and prayer. Be in touch with where you experience poverty, a lack, an emptiness in your life these days. Pray for the Spirit to fill your heart.

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<sup>1</sup> Members should feel free to speak to any question(s) they choose. It is not necessary for the questions to be taken in the order they are presented. Not every question needs to be considered in a given session. In addition to the questions suggested, there are always universal questions that may be brought to any scripture: How does this scripture encourage you? How does this scripture challenge you?

<sup>2</sup> While a number of the action suggestions are particular to the Archdiocese of Hartford, we have also made an effort to include 800 numbers, addresses and web site information to accommodate those in other parts of the country. In the absence of that information, we encourage **Quest** users elsewhere to let their imaginations lead them to implement comparable actions where they live.

## SENDING FORTH AND CLOSING PRAYER

*(The leader invites the community to a time of quiet. After a minute of silence, the gospel of the week is re-read by a member of the community. Following the reading, the leader poses this question to the members: “**What does Christ say to you/us in hearing this gospel today?**” The community pauses for a full five to seven minutes of prayerful attention to how Christ speaks to them in this gospel. After this time of silence, the leader invites members simply to mention a word or two or a brief thought that captures what they hear Christ saying to them.)*

*Following this sharing, join in singing the **MusicQuest** selection, “Make Us True Servants.” See p. 87 for lyrics. When the song is complete, the leader invites prayers of praise, thanksgiving and petition. To each prayer, members respond, “**Make us your faithful stewards, O God.**” When the petitions are complete, the leader invites each of the members to take one of the slips of paper from the table to remember to pray in the week ahead for those who are served and those who serve at the group that is named.*

*The session concludes with the praying of the Lord’s prayer and the exchange of a sign of peace.)*