

LAMPLIGHTER

APRIL 2009

THEME: “Under God’s Watchful Eye; Living with Too Little Time” LUKE 12:6-9

Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others, faithfully administering God's grace in its various forms. (1 Pet 4:10 NIV)

Dear Time Managers,

Pope Pius XII was very time conscious. During a brief interview with Monsignor Roncalli, who was later to become Pope John XXIII, Pius said that he had appointed Roncalli papal nuncio to France, adding “I wanted to tell you that I was the one who had the idea about you, but I am sorry that I will be able to give you only ten minutes now.”

After two minutes had elapsed Roncalli responded, “All I need to know is that you want me.” With a gesture of love and respect he added, “I can make you a gift of the remaining eight minutes.”

Time is a precious gift of God, and as good stewards we use it wisely. But sometimes we fall short of showing love to the neighbor when we ration our time for him too severely. How do you fill your time?

We, admittedly, have filled our time with many things. We go to sporting events like the state basketball tournaments. We attend cultural events like the theater or art gallery. We take in a movie or hang out at the mall with our friends. While I am not disparaging one’s need for relaxation and down time, I wonder if our attempt to fill those voids is a means of repelling the boredoms of life. We have become a self-serving society. We think things like: “It’s about time that I get my turn. It’s about time someone waits on me for once.” When we come to think of time as something we personally possess – such as it is my time and I can do with my time whatever I desire—we become guilty of idolatry. Idolatry is defined as trusting anything or anyone other than God; or when we fear, love, or trust in anything or anyone more than we fear, love, and trust in God.

Read Luke 16:19-31, 1 Samuel 17, Matthew 26:69-75. Who or what did these people trust more than God? Are we guilty of falling into the same snares and traps?

Our time is a precious gift that God gives to each of us. Contrary to the popular notion, we will not always have time. For this reason we need to be good stewards of the time God does give us. So how do you spend your time? First, we would do well to spend time in worship. Luke 11:28 says: “Blessed rather are those who hear the word of God and obey it” (Heb 10:25 NIV). “Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another--and all the more as you see the Day approaching.” Worship is where God comes to us in Word and Sacrament ministry and assures us of His love and forgiveness. Many people want to make worship an arbitrary event, however it is where God grants us His blessing and commands us to be present. Secondly, we take opportunity to serve our neighbor with acts of kindness in order that we may be “doers” of the Word and not just simply hearers. (James 1:23-24 NIV) “Anyone who listens to the word but does not do what it says is like a man who looks at his face in a mirror {24} and, after looking at himself, goes away and immediately forgets what he looks like.” (James 2:18 NIV) “But someone will say, ‘You have faith; I have deeds.’ Show me your faith without deeds, and I will show you my faith by what I do.” It is also where God equips us to carry His Word to others. With the foreknowledge of the uncertainty of time, we bring the message of God’s grace with a sense of urgency. (Matt 24:44 NIV) “So you also must be ready, because the Son of Man will come at an hour when you do not expect him.”

Let us not be selfish with the time God has given to us, but use it wisely by spending time in worship, proclaiming that word to others, and serving our neighbor with acts of kindness, for time is too little.

Close with prayer, the Lord’s Prayer, Benediction, and Song – #22 “I Love to Tell the Story.”