

**25th Sunday in Ordinary Time**

**09-18-2022**

**Jesus teaches his disciples that they must choose between two potential masters: “No servant can serve two masters. Either he will hate the one and love the other or be attentive to the one and despise the other. You cannot give yourself to God and money” (Lk 16:1-13). In the First Reading for today’s Mass, Amos the prophet (8<sup>th</sup> Century B.C.) chastises the Israelites for preferring money to God. Amos says,**

**Hear this, you who trample upon the needy and destroy the poor of the land! “When will the new moon be over,” you ask “that we may sell our grain, and the Sabbath, that we may display our wheat? We will diminish the ephah, add to the shekel, and fix our scale for cheating! We will buy the lowly man for silver, and the poor man for a pair of sandals; even the refuse of the wheat we will sell!” The Lord has sworn by the pride of Jacob: Never will I forget a thing they have done! (Amos 8:4-7)**

**Notice, God’s people are anxious to get their religious days over so they can scheme and make money. They, in effect, despise and are inattentive to the worship of God, but they look forward with zeal to having and playing with their money! This in fact is a classic example of one of the fruits of having an inordinate attachment to money: lukewarmness in spiritual matters. St. John of the Cross teaches us that giving ourselves to money results in “a blunting of the mind in relation to God, darkening of God’s goods, just as a cloud darkens the air and prevents the sun’s illumination. . . . Dullness of mind and darkness of judgment in understanding truth and judging well of each thing as it is in itself. . . . lukewarmness in spiritual matters, and carelessness about them, the observance of them through mere formality, force, or habit, rather than through love” (*The Ascent of Mt Carmel*, Bk 3, ch 19, #3,6).**

**Yes, greed is a subtle, deceptive, debilitating, and destructive vice! We all recognize the fact that we live in a materialistic culture. I’m afraid the sins addressed by Amos are alive and well today! Do we not see every week Catholics who are lukewarm and careless about spiritual matters? . . . Who attend Mass (if at all!) as a mere formality or habit, rather than through love? . . . Who are anxious for Mass need to examine ourselves and ask: to what degree have I been infected by materialism, how attentive am I to spiritual matters? Jesus is absolutely right, we cannot serve two masters! Either we will hate the one and love the other or be attentive to the one and despise the other.**

**We cannot give ourselves to God and money!**

**Your Servant in Christ, Fr. Terry Staples**