



## Twenty-fifth Sunday in Ordinary Time: Lectionary: 135

### Am 8:4-7 (1)

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 the wheat?  
 We will diminish the ephah,  
 add to the shekel,  
 and fix our scales for cheating!  
 We will buy the lowly for silver,  
 and the poor 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!

No mercy, justice to the poor

Profiteering After Sabbath

Injustice

Justice

### Responsorial Psalm: Ps 113:1-2, 4-6, 7-8 (RPs)

R. (cf. 1a, 7b) **Praise the Lord who lifts up the poor.**

Praise, you servants of the LORD,  
 praise the name of the LORD.  
 Blessed be the name of the LORD  
 both now and forever.

R. **Praise the Lord who lifts up the poor**

High above all nations is the LORD;  
 above the heavens is his glory.  
 Who is like the LORD, our God, who is enthroned on high  
 and looks upon the heavens and the earth below?

R. **Praise the Lord who lifts up the poor.**

He raises up the lowly from the dust;  
 from the dunghill he lifts up the poor  
 to seat them with princes,  
 with the princes of his own people.

R. **Praise the Lord who lifts up the poor.**

**Preferential Option for the Poor**

Preferential Option for the Poor

### 1 Tm 2:1-8 (2)

Beloved:

First of all, I ask that supplications, prayers,  
 petitions, and thanksgivings be offered **for everyone**,  
 for kings and for all in authority,



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that **we may lead a quiet and tranquil life**

Peaceful life

in all devotion and dignity.

This is good and pleasing to God our savior,

who wills everyone to be saved

Salvation

and to come to knowledge of the truth.

For there is one God.

There is also one mediator between God and men,

the man Christ Jesus,

Christology

who gave himself as ransom for all.

This was the testimony at the proper time.

For this I was appointed preacher and apostle

— I am speaking the truth, I am not lying —,

teacher of the Gentiles in faith and truth.

It is my wish, then, that in every place the men should pray,  
lifting up holy hands, without anger or argument.

Intercession

[Alleluia: Cf. 2 Cor 8:9 \(GA\)](#)

R. **Alleluia, alleluia.**

Though our **Lord Jesus Christ was rich, he became poor,**

so that by his poverty you might become rich.

Poverty to Riches

R. **Alleluia, alleluia.**

[Gospel: Lk 16:1-13 \(3\)](#)

Jesus said to his disciples,

"A rich man had a steward

who was reported to him for squandering his property.

He summoned him and said,

'What is this I hear about you?

Prepare a full account of your stewardship,

because you can no longer be my steward.'

The steward said to himself, 'What shall I do,

now that my master is taking the position of steward away from me?

I am not strong enough to dig and I am ashamed to beg.

I know what I shall do so that,

when I am removed from the stewardship,

they may welcome me into their homes.'

He called in his master's debtors one by one.

To the first he said,

'How much do you owe my master?'

He replied, 'One hundred measures of olive oil.'



He said to him, 'Here is your promissory note.  
Sit down and quickly write one for fifty.'  
Then to another the steward said, 'And you, how much do you owe?'  
He replied, 'One hundred kors of wheat.'  
The steward said to him, 'Here is your promissory note;  
write one for eighty.'  
And the master commended that dishonest steward for acting prudently.  
"For the children of this world  
are more prudent in dealing with their own generation  
than are the children of light.  
I tell you, make friends for yourselves with dishonest wealth,  
so that when it fails, you will be welcomed into eternal dwellings.  
The person who is **trustworthy** in very small matters  
is also **trustworthy** in great ones;  
and the person who is dishonest in very small matters  
is also dishonest in great ones.  
If, therefore, you are not **trustworthy** with dishonest wealth,  
who will trust you with true wealth?  
If you are not **trustworthy** with what belongs to another,  
who will give you what is yours?  
No servant can serve two masters.  
He will either hate one and love the other,  
or be devoted to one and despise the other.  
You cannot serve both God and mammon."

## Survey

### Introduction

### **Preferential Option for the Poor/ Social Justice**

## Contextual Analysis

### **Historical Context**

Gospel pericope takes place during the journey to Jerusalem (Rothschild, 1660). "Luke's Gospel is the gospel of the poor and lowly."<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Marvin Richardson Vincent, [\*Word Studies in the New Testament\*](#), vol. 1 (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1887), 269. Verbum.



“Proclaim the word; be persistent whether it is convenient or inconvenient; convince, reprimand, encourage through all patience and teaching. For the time will come when people will not tolerate sound doctrine but, following their own desires and insatiable curiosity, will accumulate teachers and will stop listening to the truth and will be diverted to myths. But you, be self-possessed in all circumstances; put up with hardship; perform the work of an evangelist; fulfill your ministry” (2 Tim 4:2-5).

- “The promotion of justice and peace and the penetration of all spheres of human society with the light and the leaven of the Gospel have always been the object of the Church’s efforts in fulfilment of the Lord’s command” (CSDC, #159).
- (John Quincy Adams): “The highest glory of the American Revolution was this: it connected in one indissoluble bond the principles of civil government with the principles of Christianity.”
- (Thomas Jefferson): “Jefferson repeatedly praised the pre-eminence of Jesus' moral teachings over all others. . . [Jefferson] wrote, '[Jesus]' system of morality was the most benevolent and sublime probably that has been ever taught, and consequently more perfect than those of any of the ancient philosophers” (Barton and Barton, 203).
- “We instruct you, brothers, in the name of [our] Lord Jesus Christ, to shun any brother who conducts himself in a disorderly way and not according to the tradition they received from us. For you know how one must imitate us. For we did not act in a disorderly way among you, nor did we eat food received free from anyone. On the contrary, in toil and drudgery, night and day we worked, so as not to burden any of you” (2 Thess 3:6-8).
- “The laborer deserves his payment” (Luke 10:7).

### Canonical Context

Lukan themes of Israel as a “light to the nations,” people in the margins, “the way.”

(3) “Jesus reached out to all sorts of people, even to those who seemed to have no chance of salvation” (Perkins, 399).

(3) “Calls upon followers to renounce material goods in order to become disciples” (Perkins, 400).

(1) Amos is known as “the prophet of social justice” (Faley, 620).

### Cultural Context

Local, state, and national governments creating policies that do not follow established laws intended to provide societal protection, panhandlers, tents in public areas for homeless, mercy and justice being



selectively applied or withheld, the suppression of free speech, religious freedom, and Christian values and principles, some school districts leading cultural education of children against the wishes of their parents, oppressive high interest loans for those with low FICO scores, the soul of a country is highlighted yet the souls of some individuals and of the unborn are questioned of their existence, living our own individual truths vs. acknowledging that Jesus is the way, the truth, and the life (*Jn 14:6*).

“There is . . . a painstaking search for a better material world, without a parallel spiritual advancement” (*GS, #4, 906*). “Do not be conformed to this world” (*Rom 12:2*).

“Today there is an inescapable duty to make ourselves the neighbor of every man, no matter who he is, and if we meet him, to come to his aid in a positive way, whether he is an aged person abandoned by all, a foreign worker despised without reason, a refugee, an illegitimate child wrongly suffering for a sin he did not commit, or a starving human being who awakens our conscience. . . All offenses against life itself . . . all violations of the integrity of the human person . . . all offenses against human dignity” (*GS, #27, 928*). “When men and women provide for themselves and their families in such a way as to be of service to the community as well, they can rightly look upon their work as a prolongation of the work of the creator, a service to their fellow men, and their personal contribution to the fulfillment in history of the divine plan” (*GS, #34, 934*).

“All citizens should remember that they have the right and the duty to contribute according to their ability to the genuine progress of their own community and this must be recognized by the civil authority” (*GS, #65, 971*). “The Council urges individuals and governments according to their ability to share and dispose of their goods to help others, above all by giving them aid which will enable them to help and develop themselves. . . Care must be taken to prevent the citizens from slipping into a kind of passivity vis-à-vis society, or of irresponsibility in their duty, or of a refusal to do their fair share” (*GS, #69, 976*).

“Anyone who in obedience to Christ seeks first the kingdom of God will derive from it a stronger and purer love for helping all his brethren and for accomplishing the task of justice under the inspiration of charity” (*GS, #72, 979*).

“This work also shows the value of Catholic social doctrine as an instrument of evangelization (cf. *Centesimus Annus, 54*), because it places the human person and society in relationship with the light of the Gospel” (*CSDC, #2*).

“*The permanent principles of the Church’s social doctrine constitute the very heart of Catholic social teaching. These are the principles of: the dignity of the human person . . . the foundation of all the other principles and content of the Church’s social doctrine; the common good; subsidiarity; and solidarity*” (*CSDC, #160*). “The Church presents them as the primary and fundamental parameters of reference for interpreting and evaluating social phenomena” (*CSDC, #161*).

- The responsibility for attaining the common good, besides falling to individual persons, belongs also to the State (*CSDC, #168*).



"I'm starting with the man in the mirror. I'm asking him to change his ways. And no message could've been any clearer. If they wanna make the world a better place, take a look at yourself and then make a change" (Michael Jackson, song, "Man in the Mirror," 1988).

## Detailed Analysis of the Text

(RPs): "The idea of lifting up the anawim is an important scriptural theme [*in Luke*]" (Faley, 621).

(3) "Usurious practices common of agents acting on behalf of their masters. . . The dishonest steward . . . had the debtors write new notes that reflected only the real amount owed to the master, minus the steward's profit. . . The parable teaches the prudent use of one's material goods in light of an imminent crisis" (Osiek and Hoppe, 1698; cf. Faley, 622; cf. Fitzmyer, 1101). "There is no evidence that the steward could pocket the interest as his commission; the steward's job was to make money for his master. . . There is no evidence that the steward is foregoing his commission. The steward is going to get even with his master at the master's expense" (Karris, 708). "Faced with a crisis, [the dishonest manager] judged prudently how to cope with it. Christian disciples are also faced with a crisis by the kingdom/judgment preaching of Jesus, and the prudent use of material possessions might be recommended in the light of that crisis" (Fitzmyer, 1098).

Poor: "As a phase of its universality, the humblest and most sinful are shown as not excluded from Jesus."<sup>2</sup>

- "The preferential love for the poor represents a fundamental choice for the Church, and she proposes it to all people of good will. . . It is . . . apparent that the Church cannot fail to make her voice heard concerning the "new things" (*res novae*) typical of the modern age<sup>3</sup>" (Cardinal Angelo Sodano, Secretary of State, in *CSDC*).
- "The Church's social doctrine, in consideration of the privilege accorded by the Gospel to the poor, repeats over and over that 'the more fortunate should *renounce* some of their rights so as to place their goods more generously at the service of others' and that an excessive affirmation of equality 'can give rise to an individualism in which each one claims his own rights without wishing to be answerable for the common good'" (*CSDC*, #158).
- "This love of preference for the poor, and the decisions which it inspires in us, cannot but embrace the immense multitudes of the hungry, the needy, the homeless, those without health care and, above all, those without hope of a better future" (*CSDC*, #182).

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<sup>2</sup> Marvin Richardson Vincent, [\*Word Studies in the New Testament\*](#), vol. 1 (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1887), 248. Verbum.

<sup>3</sup> Catholic Church, [\*Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church\*](#) (Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 2014). Verbum.



(3) “Dishonest wealth:” This “expresses a tendency of wealth to lead one to dishonesty” (Osiek and Hoppe, 1699).

(3; *Lk 16: 10-12*): “Recommends constant fidelity to those in positions of responsibility” (Osiek and Hoppe, 1699).

(3) “The incompatibility of serving God and being a slave to riches” (Osiek and Hoppe, 1699). “A warning to Christians that they cannot mix service to God with the pursuit of wealth” (Perkins, 407). “If disciples do not share possessions, they will not be entrusted with the true, heavenly reality. . . One is loyal to God by sharing mammon with others, especially those in want” (Karris, 708). “Either your money will serve God, or you will ask God to serve your money” (Evans, 1208).

(3) “Using money responsibly with integrity” (International Bible Society, 1505; cf. Karris, 708). “Christians ought to use their earthly resources wisely and generously for kingdom purposes. In this way, lives will be changed and people saved by the Gospel” (Evans, 1208). Money should be used “in such a way as to assure eternal happiness, i.e. for the good of others” (Faley, 623).

(3) The master “praises the prudent energetic initiative of the steward” (Brown, 249).

(3) “If you have not been faithful over what belongs to another (the worldly wealth God has entrusted to you), then who will give you your own treasure in heaven” (Culpepper, 9:309)?

(3) “Abundant money corrupts and that the right way to use it is to give it away to the poor and thus make friends who, when they go to heaven, can help” (Brown, 250). “Using possessions to benefit others, especially the needy” (Karris, 707). “Disciples are to convert mammon into heavenly capital by sharing it with others, particularly the needy” (Karris, 708). “In making the church’s social agenda our own, we are making friends with wealth and using it in such ways as to assure our standing with God” (Faley, 624). “The parable turns on the steward’s shrewd response to the urgency of his situation and invites hearers to understand that they are likewise in the midst of a crisis that demands an urgent decision if disaster is to be avoided. Faced with loss of his position, the dishonest steward acted decisively to provide for his future. One who hears the gospel knows that just such a decisive act is required of those who will stake their all on the coming kingdom of God” (Culpepper, 9: 310).

(3) “mammon:” “That in which one puts one’s trust” (Karris, 708; cf. Fitzmyer, 1109). “Mammon thus becomes the god that one serves” (Fitzmyer, 1107). “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart” (*Deut 6:5*). “Those who follow Jesus, therefore, are expected to be faithful before God in all aspects of life” (Culpepper, 9:314).

(all): “Homiletic and Catechetical Helps: Personal and social sin. The conduct of the manager in the parable. Consumerism: To serve God or mammon? The meaning of sin? Examples from your experience of using material goods in an enlightened way” (Faley, 624f.).



## Synthesis (Body of Homily)

### Care of the Poor, per the readings

(1) Amos is known as “the prophet of social justice” (Faley, 620). Today’s reading refers to those who “trample upon the needy,” who favor profiteering over celebrating the Sabbath.

- “There is . . . a painstaking search for a better material world, without a parallel spiritual advancement” (GS, #4, 906). **CLEANER, EQUITABLE, EQUALITATIVE, FREEDOM.**
- “Anyone, who in obedience to Christ, seeks first the kingdom of God, will derive from it a stronger and purer love for helping all his brethren and for accomplishing the task of justice under the inspiration of charity” (GS, #72, 979). **CONVERSION ENERGIZES THIS LOVE FOR ALL, FOR JUSTICE.**
- “I’m starting with the man in the mirror. I’m asking him to change his ways. And no message could’ve been any clearer. If they wanna make the world a better place, take a look at yourself and then make a change” (Michael Jackson, song, “Man in the Mirror,” 1988). **SEEK GOD!**

(RPs): “Praise the Lord who lifts up the poor.” **WHO ARE THE POOR? NOT THE LAZY!**

- “The humblest and most sinful.”<sup>4</sup>
- “The hungry, the needy, the homeless, those without health care and, above all, those without hope of a better future” (CSDC, #182).

(3) Lukan themes of Israel as a “light to the nations,” “the way,” and as a nation who recognizes the dignity of those in the fringes. **OUR NATION CAN BE A LIGHT TO THE NATIONS!**

(3) Lukan story of rich master, and his dishonest steward righting his ways with the poorer debtors, and the steward becoming trustworthy and a friend to those with less, thus becoming “welcome in eternal dwellings.” **THE STEWARD CHANGED HIS WAYS! WE CAN TOO!**

- The parable teaches the prudent use of one’s material goods in light of an imminent crisis” (Osiek and Hoppe, 1698; cf. Faley, 622; cf. Fitzmyer, 1101). **ALWAYS DO WHAT IS RIGHT AND JUST.**

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<sup>4</sup> Marvin Richardson Vincent, [\*Word Studies in the New Testament\*](#), vol. 1 (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1887), 248. Verbum.





### Church Wisdom on Social Justice Between Individuals

God was first. There was nothing else. Then creation with humanity, all at God's desire and will. God offered creation to humanity, to use responsibly. **God was before our political parties and our government.**

Jesus is "the way, the truth, and the life" (*Jn 14:6*; cf. (2)). **OUR PERFECT MODEL.**

"Proclaim the word; be persistent whether it is convenient or inconvenient; convince, reprimand, encourage through all patience and teaching. For the time will come when people will not tolerate sound doctrine but, **following their own desires and insatiable curiosity**, will accumulate teachers and will stop listening to the truth and **will be diverted to myths**. But you, be self-possessed in all circumstances; put up with hardship; perform the work of an evangelist; fulfill your ministry" (*2 Tim 4:2-5*). **INDIVIDUALS AFFECT OTHERS. FALSE TEACHERS, ECONOMIC FORUMS AND SUMMITS, GLOBALISTS AND BUREAUCRATS WITH SOME KIND OF RULES-BASED INTERNATIONAL WORLD ORDER, UNIVERSITY PROFESSOR-FOUNDED THEORIES. WE MUST TEACH THE TRUTH OF JESUS, HE WHO WAS FIRST, IN WHOM AND THROUGH WHOM ALL WAS CREATED!**

So, Jesus instituted the Church, "The Church presents [her principles of social doctrine] as the primary and fundamental parameters of reference, for interpreting and evaluating social phenomena" (*CSDC*, #161; cf. (2)).

- "When men and women **provide for themselves and their families** in such a way as to be of service to the community as well, they can rightly look upon their work as a prolongation of the work of the creator, a service to their fellow men, and their personal contribution to the fulfillment in history of the divine plan" (*GS*, #34, 934). **WORK DEMONSTRATES DIGNITY.**
- "Today there is an **inescapable duty** to make ourselves the neighbor of every man, no matter who he is, and if we meet him, to come to his aid in a positive way. [This neighborliness extends towards] all offenses against life itself . . . all violations of the integrity of the human person . . . [and] all offenses against human dignity" (*GS*, #27, 928). **WE ARE A NEIGHBOR AND WE ARE TO AID EVERY PERSON! NO MATTER ONE'S RACE, COUNTRY, HEALTH STATUS, POLITICAL PARTY, AND PERSONAL IDENTITY, FROM CONCEPTION TO NATURAL DEATH.**

### Church's Wisdom on Social Justice and the State

The responsibility for attaining the common good, besides falling to individual persons, belongs also to the State (*CSDC*, #168). **SEPARATION OF CHURCH AND STATE DOES NOT APPLY HERE!**

- "All citizens should remember that they have the **right and the duty to contribute according to their ability** to the genuine progress of **their own community** and this must be **recognized by the civil authority**" (*GS*, #65, 971). **SUBSIDIARITY. APPLIES TO ALL NATIONS.**
- "The promotion of justice and peace and the penetration of all spheres of human society with the light and the leaven of the Gospel have always been the object of the Church's efforts in fulfillment of the Lord's command" (*CSDC*, #159). **SOCIETY NEEDS GOSPEL.**



(Thomas Jefferson recognized this): “Jefferson repeatedly praised the pre-eminence of Jesus' moral teachings over all others. . . [Jefferson] wrote, '[Jesus'] system of morality was the most benevolent and sublime probably that has been ever taught, and consequently more perfect than those of any of the ancient philosophers” (Barton and Barton, 203). **GOVERNMENT NEEDS GOSPEL. SEPARATION OF CHURCH AND STATE DOES NOT APPLY HERE!**

### **Human Dignity of Every Person (The Center of Social Doctrine)**

“The laborer deserves his payment” (*Luke 10:7*). **THOSE WHO CAN HELP THEMSELVES.**

(3) “Jesus reached out to all sorts of people, even to those who seemed to have no chance of salvation” (Perkins, 399). **HELP THE NEEDY, THOSE WHO CANNOT OR DO NOT HELP THEMSELVES. DO NOT SIN! SIN NO MORE!**

“We instruct you, brothers, in the name of [our] Lord Jesus Christ, to shun any brother who conducts himself in a disorderly way. . . We did not . . . eat food received free from anyone. On the contrary, in toil and drudgery, night and day, **we worked**, so as not to burden any of you” (2 *Thess 3:6-8*). **DIGNITY OF WORK.**

- “The Church’s social doctrine, in consideration of the privilege accorded by the Gospel to the poor, **repeats over and over** that ‘the more fortunate should renounce some of their rights so as to place their goods more generously at the service of others’ and that **an excessive affirmation of equality** ‘can give rise to an individualism in which each one claims his own rights without wishing to be answerable for the common good’” (*CSDC*, #158). **THE COMMON GOOD SUPERCEDES EXCESSIVE INDIVIDUAL IDEAS OF EQUALITY.**

(3) “**If you have not been faithful over what belongs to another** (the worldly wealth God has entrusted to you), then who will give you your own treasure in heaven” (Culpepper, 9:309)? **APPLIES TO EVERYONE, THE RICH, THE POOR, OVER WHAT BELONGS TO EACH OTHER OR WHAT BELONGS TO GOD!**

## Papal Reference

“What great harm an easy life and well-being cause; the adoption of a bourgeois heart paralyzes us. By renouncing an easy life in order to follow Jesus’ call, [we learn] how to love poverty, how to feel greater love for the poor and for the sick”<sup>5</sup> (Pope Francis, homily, May 12, 2013).

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<sup>5</sup> Francis, “[Holy Mass and Canonizations \(Seventh Sunday of Easter, 12 May 2013\)](#),” in *Homilies of Pope Francis, 2013–2015 (English)* (Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 2016).



## Concluding Sentence

May we be open to the life and teachings of Jesus Christ, may we allow our minds and hearts to grow closer to our loving God, and may all of us, those who are with and those who are without, recognize and accept the human dignity of each other and within ourselves.

May we all be **trustworthy** in very small matters, and **trustworthy** in great matters.

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