



SMALL GROUP NEWSLETTER
ST. MARY OF THE VISITATION PARISH
CAMBRIDGE, (H) ONT.

TWENTY-FIFTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME
September 18, 2016



Introduction to the Word:

The month of September signals the start of Fall. To kick off the 2016-2017 year we're offering an all-new series taking a fresh look at what might happen if three principles were to guide the next year for us. We pray that these will act as catalysts to help you grow in your faith, get connected, build relationships and above all grow closer to God! It's all about doing what disciples do and, in the process, finding our way to Him

Week One, we learned in the parables of the Lost Coin and the Lost Sheep that we need to *"hold our plans loosely and God's purpose tightly"*. We were also reminded that it's important to recall that often in our waiting, God is operating and that His timing is a lot more like a *"crockpot then a microwave"*, getting all the simmering in and just right before we serve.

Warm-Up:

How many times have you listened to a story from the news and been left scratching your head, saying to yourself, *"What in the world was that all about"*?

- What type of news causes you to become discouraged?
- Are there things, that when you hear them, cause you to scratch your head and wonder what the direction of the world is ? If so give some examples
- What do you do in those moments when it might seem to others "we have lost hope?"

CALL TO PRAYER (5 MINUTES)



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Let us now prepare to celebrate the presence and compassion of Jesus before we listen to His Word.

Lord Jesus, you always welcome home the lost and the wayward, Lord have mercy.

Christ Jesus, you always celebrate our “return,” Christ have mercy.

Lord Jesus, you are always with us, bringing joy to our world, Lord, have mercy.

Let us pray together our Heart to Home Prayer:

*God Our Heavenly Father, we long to make our thoughts your thoughts,
and our ways your ways. As we prepare with attentive mind and open heart
to hear your Word Lord, we long to be empowered with your Spirit
so that we may bring your Word to our families, our parish and our communities.*

*This, our prayer, we make through the intercession of Our Lady of the Visitation and in name of
Christ Jesus our Lord. Amen.*

SCRIPTURE REFLECTION TIME (45 minutes)

(Please select one person –not including the leader – to take a turn at reading the scripture passages below.)

FIRST READING (Amos 8:4–7)

Hear this, you that trample on the needy, and bring to ruin the poor of the land, saying, “When will the new moon be over so that we may sell grain; and the Sabbath, so that we may offer wheat for sale? We will measure out less and charge more, and tamper with the scales, buying the poor for silver and the needy for a pair of sandals, and selling the sweepings of the wheat.” The Lord has sworn by the pride of Jacob: “Surely I will never forget any of their deeds.”

The Word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

SECOND READING (1 Timothy 2:1–7)

Beloved: I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for everyone, for kings and all who are in high positions, so that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and dignity. This is right and is acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour, who desires everyone to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.

For there is one God; there is also one mediator between God and the human race, Christ Jesus, himself human, who gave himself a ransom for all; this was attested at the right time.

For this I was appointed a herald and an apostle, a teacher of the Gentiles in faith and truth. I am telling the truth, I am not lying.

The Word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

GOSPEL (Luke 16:1–13)

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Luke. **Glory to you, O Lord.**



SMALL GROUP NEWSLETTER ST. MARY OF THE VISITATION PARISH CAMBRIDGE, (H) ONT.

Jesus said to the disciples, “There was a rich man who had a manager, and charges were brought to him that the manager was squandering his property. So the rich man summoned him and said to him, ‘What is that that I hear about you? Give me an accounting of your management, because you cannot be my manager any longer.’

“Then the manager said to himself, ‘What will I do, now that my master is taking the position away from me? I am not strong enough to dig, and I am ashamed to beg. I have decided what to do so that, when I am dismissed as manager, people may welcome me into their homes.’

“So, summoning his master’s debtors one by one, he asked the first, ‘How much do you owe my master?’ He answered, ‘A hundred jugs of olive oil.’ He said to him, ‘Take your bill, sit down quickly, and make it fifty.’ Then he asked another, ‘And how much do you owe?’ He replied, ‘A hundred containers of wheat.’ He said to him, ‘Take your bill and make it eighty.’

“And his master commended the dishonest manager because he had acted shrewdly; for the children of this age are more shrewd in dealing with their own generation than are the children of light.

“And I tell you, make friends for yourselves by means of dishonest wealth so that when it is gone, they may welcome you into the eternal homes.

The Gospel of the Lord. **Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.**

(Allow a few minutes for quiet and for a brief reflection on a meaningful word or thought)

COMMENTARY:

[You may also as a group wish to listen again to the Audio of the Lord’s Day Message](#)

It is so easy to drift:–

- we drift in our diets - we drift in our routines
- we drift our chores or household actions
- we drift in our prayer, attendance at Mass

There are two things about drift, first it is easy and second, it can begin as a happening but become a habit. But we are not meant to drift, we are meant to move forward. In the Gospel of today we are introduced to a manager, probably a talented fellow but one who began to drift in his duties, his responsibilities, his loyalties and even his morals. His master came and discovered this and was disappointed and angry.

Such a story is our story, for each of us could, in moments of stress, tension, confusion, begin to drift:

- one view of a website can become an addictive habit which destroys a marriage
- one misguided moment taking your eye off the road can become a traffic incident



SMALL GROUP NEWSLETTER ST. MARY OF THE VISITATION PARISH CAMBRIDGE, (H) ONT.

- one sharing of a secret can become a betrayal of trust in gossip
- one occasion of drinking too much can become an addiction which can change a life for ever

So first - how does this happen and second - how do we deal with it? First, it happens from within. The manager, having been caught in his drifting by the Master, begins to develop a construct of reality that was not rooted in good, and from within himself developed “his plan” without prayer and in isolation from counsel or God. He decides to look out only for himself and not trust the Master to care and simmer things. Before long he had turned his back on what really mattered

Second, it happens when we feel we are without. When we fail to keep things in perspective. When our focus is on ourselves and what we have or have not. **When the me is bigger than the we – it is a sure sign we will drift.**

Third, it occurs when we consider whomever and not God. In the Gospel the manager wanted others to owe him, he took the Master out of the picture and even under cut him. Sometimes we can fail to comprehend what the plan of God might be and our response is to “take matters into our own hands” as opposed to trusting God and His providence and plan. We want to microwave and not let God use the crockpot.

Cardinal John Henry Newman, a great model of faith, once felt alone but when he took his eyes off of himself and put his eyes back on the cross - he began to have that unshakeable sense of the mission entrusted to him by God, he declared:

Therefore, I will trust Him. [...] If I am in sickness, my sickness may serve Him, in perplexity, my perplexity may serve Him. [...] He does nothing in vain. [...] He may take away my friends. He may throw me among strangers. He may make me feel desolate, make my spirits sink, hide the future from me. Still, He knows what He is about.

The key to avoiding drifting is faithfulness. Our second reading reminds us to live lives that are “quiet peaceable life in godliness and dignity.” Sometimes in life we drift, but also sometimes in life things drift our way

- Sometimes it’s a moment when we don’t understand or can’t define a relationship
- Sometimes it’s an occasion when we don’t understand God’s plan
- Sometimes it’s a moment when our future seems uncertain, scary or even going in a direction that frightens us - a job that awaits us, a call to duty which would not be of our choosing
- Sometimes it’s just a season



SMALL GROUP NEWSLETTER ST. MARY OF THE VISITATION PARISH CAMBRIDGE, (H) ONT.

We can drift during this time - become lax, turn inward or even become so frightened we forget who we are and what we are about. But here is the Good News - God has not! He couldn't have abandoned any of us or His plan.

So the season of drifting is over - Give Him the Year. God is preparing you for a greater plan for His glory - something different than you could possibly know? And He needs you free for it? I don't know the mind of God but His name is Love. Let us make His name our name and His will ours as we give Him this Year

*(Allow about 5 – 10 minutes for the participants to react to the **Commentary** to identify a newly discovered insight or idea.)*

Questions for Reflection and Discussion: (15-20 minutes)

1. What are some signs in your life that tell you that you are beginning to drift?
2. What do you do when you notice drifting in your life?
3. Do you think our world is drift a bit – share why or why not ?
4. How could we as people of prayer help one another when we believe that we are drifting?
5. John Henry Cardinal Newman spoke of sickness and perplexity both being used by God – nothing is in vain – do you agree – discuss ? Could these ever lead to drifting in a person's life – discuss.

Intercessions:

Leader: Let us be one in prayer for the Church, the Body of Christ: that we may deepen our reverence for the Eucharistic sacrifice which gives us life. Our response: Lord Hear us

For our parish community, may the Lord continue to bless our Family of Faith as we move forward in being a welcoming community, faithful to who God made us to be and rooted in the Eucharist as the source of our evangelization - all for His Glory. We pray to the Lord

For all involved in Eucharistic Adoration, may this devotion continue to lead us in genuine peace and prayer and may many respond to the invitation to spend time with the Lord. We pray to the Lord.

For the youth of our parish: may they continue to inspire each one of us to live the gospel message in a spirit of gratitude and joy. We pray to the Lord.

For those who are suffering because of sickness: may they find hope and strength by receiving the Real Presence of Christ in the Holy Eucharist. We pray to the Lord.



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For our loved ones who have died and the Intentions in our Parish Book of Prayer. We pray to the Lord.

Leader: **Let us seek the intercession of the Patroness of our Parish as we pray: [Hail Mary](#)**

Closing Activity and Prayer (15-20 minutes)

(This time is reserved for quiet prayer as well as for an action-response to the communal reflections. You may wish to create and add petitions of prayer at this time. This time also intent to provide moments to connect and “outreach” to the larger community.)

GROUP PRAYER/ ACTION:

Throughout this Year of Mercy, Pope Francis has implored us to consider how God might be calling each one of us to be an instrument of mercy and healing in the world.

GROUP PRAYER COMMITMENT

- Consider together as a group a social outreach which connects to our parish – our Haiti Mission, commitment to sponsoring a family at Advent, bringing “Canadian Tire Dollars”, making quilts, helping the Outreach program at St Patrick Parish in Hamilton.

Looking for More: Have you heard about [Starting Point?](#) Check out details and consider helping someone who has wandered away from faith or our parish to come back home.

Let us pray (together)

God did not create a single life in vain.

Lord, guide us all to achieve the purpose for which we were born and give us the grace we need to fulfill our vocation as your beloved children. We make this prayer in Jesus' name. Amen.

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