

## 18<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time - Year C - Luke 12:13-21

1. The 1980s were a terrible time in El Salvador.
  - a. The government, backed with US money
  - b. Brutally oppressed its citizens
  - c. Believing them to be influenced by Marxist ideology
  - d. And as such dedicated to the destruction of the state
    - i. And the spread of communism in Central America
2. And yet as anyone who was there will tell you
  - a. The vast majority of them were poor *campesinos*
  - b. dedicated to nothing more than the safety of their family
  - c. And to eking out a living while government death squads and political revolutionaries slaughtered each other.
3. In a dirty war such as this, the deaths of four women would have gone unnoticed. However, these four women were not *campesinas*; they were *gringas*.
  - a. Maura Clarke and Ita Ford were both Maryknoll Sisters
  - b. Dorothy Kazel was an Ursuline sister
  - c. Jean Donovan a 27 year old lay missionary.
4. Several days after disappearing while coming home from the airport,
  - a. they were found buried in a shallow grave.
  - b. They had been shot in the head at close range, execution style
  - c. Two of them had been raped.
5. The US government tried to claim that the women had been killed in a gun battle after they ran a road block;
  - a. But anyone who saw the bodies knew that the real reason
  - b. was because they worked with the poor,
  - c. Giving them a sense of their own value as God children
    - i. So that they might work for their own rights.
  - d. Something which the El Salvadoran government
    - i. dependent upon the rich for its power, feared.
6. Their deaths had an enormous impact on the Church in North America
  - a. Because it galvanized opposition to US funding of the Nicaraguan government.
7. But 27 years later, no one speaks much about these women.
  - a. And it is not difficult to understand why.
  - b. For we live in a **society** far more concerned with wealth than with justice
    - i. where money guarantees access to things like life liberty and the pursuit of happiness, rather than the law
  - c. We live in a **church**
    - i. far more concerned with the Latin mass than Latin America
    - ii. where you have to be a wealthy conservative to get any attention

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- iii. or a dead pope to become a saint.
  - d. We live in a **world** whose patron saints are not women like Maureen, Ita, Dorothy, and Jean but men like Donald Trump, Bill Gates, . . . and that man in today's Gospel.
- 8. We hear Jesus' parable as one about a man who lived in a world
  - a. every bit as brutal as Nicaragua in the 1980's was;
    - i. where Roman soldiers oppressed the poor
    - ii. even as the tax collectors robbed them blind.
- 9. This man was a rich man whose lands yielded a fantastic harvest
  - i. In a world where often it was a struggle for the poor just to survive.
- 10. In the face of such a generous harvest,
  - a. what did the rich man do? -
    - i. what any of us would;
- 11. He hoarded it because he believed as we so often do,
  - a. that our things will protect us from a world
    - i. which we know is still capable of being every bit as violent and cruel
      - (1) as Jesus' world in the first century was
      - (2) or Maura Ita Dorothy and Jean's world in the 20<sup>th</sup> was.
- 12. And what is wrong with that we ask?
  - a. after all the harvest came from his lands - it belonged to him.
- 13. But that is just the point;
  - a. a bountiful harvest doesn't belong to him! Because no matter how hard you work,
    - i. You don't own the rain
    - ii. you don't own the sunshine
    - iii. And most importantly you do not control the mysterious power
      - (1) which causes a seed to spring to life.
  - b. The harvest belongs to God;
    - i. and God shares it with everyone;
      - (1) even those, like the rich man, who does not need it.
- 14. If we could only hear this story like the first hearers did we would realize that the rich man wasn't so much greedy as stupid;
  - a. Because he put his trust in the harvest, rather than in the one who gave it and thus saw it as a possession to be hoarded and not as a gift to be shared with all.
- 15. So many of the parables of Jesus only make sense when we see them in this light.
  - a. That God is generous -
    - i. and to be wise is to realize that the things we think we own really own us;
    - ii. and that not to realize this is the essence of stupidity -
      - (1) or as the writer of Ecclesiastes would have said, it is vanity.

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16. In our world where so many of us suffer,
  - a. it might seem strange to say that God is generous
17. In our city, where so many are financially poor in neighborhoods rapidly becoming rich,
  - a. it might seem strange to say that God is generous
18. In our Church where the sacrifices of our parents and grandparents have created a generation of Catholics who enjoy untold wealth, and the power that comes from wealth
  - a. It might seem strange to say that God is generous.
19. But that is only because all we see the gifts given and ignore the giver
  - a. It takes people like Maura, Ita, Dorothy and Jean to remind us that everything is a gift even our lives;
  - b. And as such they are given not to be hoarded but given again and again and again in service of others.
    - i. Just like they did.
20. Imagine what a world would look like
  - a. where we saw what we have and who we are
    - i. not as something to be hoarded but as gifts to be given and shared?  
(1) and then actually did it?
  - b. It would look like a sower sowing seed everywhere
  - c. It would look like a man investing his talents for a profit
  - d. It would look like five thousand people feeding from a few loaves and fish
  - e. IT would look like Jesus sharing his body and blood in a meal
  - f. And offering his life on the cross for all.
21. In short it would look like the kingdom of God.
  - a. Exactly. A kingdom which isn't a place but an action; isn't a noun but a verb;
  - b. isn't some far off dream but a present reality glimpsed every time we see what Ita Maura Jean and Dorothy saw; and we give.
22. These forgotten women may not be our society's patron saints;
  - a. but maybe they could become ours.