

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

This past Sunday at the 9:30 Mass, in commemoration of Catechetical Sunday, we blessed and honored our catechists who instruct our Faith Formation Students as well as staff and faculty of St. Pius School. We are so grateful to all of our dedicated teachers whose sacrifice and commitment is an indispensable ministry to our St. Pius mission. In my homily last Sunday, I read a letter from a student to Sister M. Euphemia O'Connor, P.B.V.M., whose 100<sup>th</sup> birthday we celebrated on September 11<sup>th</sup>. This letter is a reflection of the often-unseen influence teachers have in our lives. This letter was written in the 1980's, while Sister was teaching at Bellarmine-Jefferson High School in Burbank.

“Dearest Sr. Euphemia,

Ever since I started school, I've never been a very good student. It's because I never tried or believed that I could get good grades or be a good student. Last year during the first semester (in your class) I was this same person and I failed. I don't know if you remember this but it changed my life forever. I came to school early one day and I was in the hall doing nothing. You came out of your room and made me go to your class. You started yelling at me and you made me read a section of my history book. So I read because I didn't want you to yell at me anymore. I found that it was interesting and I could do it. From then on, I've tried so hard in all my classes. It is because of you that I am always on Honor Roll every quarter. It is because of you that I am graduating with an HNS (National Honor Society) chord and tassel. It is because of you that I am going to graduate and it is because of you that I know I will succeed in life. You have taught me the most important things in school and life and I am forever grateful to you. You have touched my life and I will miss you when I leave Bell-Jeff.”

This letter is a wonderful illumination of the message of Jesus to his disciples we read today in Luke's Gospel. God endows each of us with gifts and talents much like the master who entrusts the care of his property to the steward. Do we use God's gifts to the best of our ability? Do we use them for service in the Kingdom? At first glance, it can seem ironic that the master rewards the steward for obviously dishonest behavior. The point being made is that the steward was smart and ingenious in making sure he avoided almost certain poverty as a result of no longer being a steward. When I was a Jesuit novice, one day the Novice Master simply wrote on the chalk board: “How can we be expected to be faithful in the big things if we are not faithful in the little ones?” This sentiment strikes at the very essence and heart of stewardship: to manage, with God's grace and mercy, all He has entrusted to our care. This presumes certain humility and wisdom in maximizing to full benefit in the Kingdom all the treasure God has given to us.

Our Second Collection today is for our Priests Retirement Fund. We have been blessed by the many priests who have served our parish of St. Pius and throughout the Archdiocese. These men were heroic in their service and generosity, making personal sacrifices and extending themselves well beyond what any of us knows. True priestly service is done in modesty and humility. I wish to thank you in advance for your generosity and financial support of our retired priests. God bless you!

Fr. Tom