



### 1) Opening prayer

God of power and mercy,  
only with your help  
can we offer you fitting service and praise.  
May we live the faith we profess  
and trust your promise of eternal life.  
We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,  
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,  
one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

### 2) Gospel reading - Luke 16,1-8

*Jesus said to his disciples, 'There was a rich man and he had a steward who was denounced to him for being wasteful with his property. He called for the man and said, "What is this I hear about you? Draw me up an account of your stewardship because you are not to be my steward any longer."*

*Then the steward said to himself, "Now that my master is taking the stewardship from me, what am I to do? Dig? I am not strong enough. Go begging? I should be too ashamed. Ah, I know what I will do to make sure that when I am dismissed from office there will be some to welcome me into their homes."*

*'Then he called his master's debtors one by one. To the first he said, "How much do you owe my master?" "One hundred measures of oil," he said. The steward said, "Here, take your bond; sit down and quickly write fifty." To another he said, "And you, sir, how much do you owe?" "One hundred measures of wheat," he said. The steward said, "Here, take your bond and write eighty."*

*'The master praised the dishonest steward for his astuteness. For the children of this world are more astute in dealing with their own kind than are the children of light.'*

### 3) Reflection

- Today the Gospel presents a parable that concerns administration of goods which is found only in Luke's Gospel. It is called The Parable of the dishonest steward. It is a disconcerting parable. Luke says: "The master praised the dishonest steward for his astuteness". The master is Jesus himself and not the administrator or steward. How is that Jesus praises a corrupt employee?
- Luke 16, 1-2: The steward is threatened to lose his job. "There was a rich man and he had a steward, who was denounced to him for being wasteful with his property. He called for the man and said, 'What is this I hear about you? Draw me up an account of your

stewardship, because you are not to be my steward any more”. This example taken from the world of business and of work speaks for itself. It refers to the existing corruption. The master discovers the corruption and decides to send away the dishonest steward. The steward, unexpectedly, finds himself in an emergency situation, obliged by the unforeseen circumstances to find a way out in order to be able to survive. When God becomes present in the life of a person, unexpectedly everything changes and the person finds himself/herself in an emergency situation. The person has to take a decision and find a way out.

- Luke 16, 3-4: What to do? Which is the way out? “Then the steward said to himself, Now that my master is taking the stewardship from me what am I to do? Dig? I am not strong enough. Go begging? I should be too ashamed”. He begins to reflect to find a way out. He analyses, one by one, the possible alternatives: to dig or work the land in order to survive, he feels that he does not have the strength to do this, and to beg, he would feel ashamed. He analyses things, and calculates well the possible alternatives. “Ah, I know what I will do to make sure that when I am dismissed from office there will be some to welcome me into their homes”. It is a question of trying to guarantee his future. The steward is coherent with his way of thinking and living.

- Luke 16, 5-7: Execution of the solution he found. “Then he called his master’s debtors, one by one, and said to the first one: How much do you owe my master? One hundred measures of oil, he said. The steward said, ‘Here, take your bond, sit down and quickly write fifty. Then he said to another one, and you, sir, how much do you owe? ‘One hundred measures of wheat’, he answered. The steward said, ‘Here take your bond and write eighty”. In his total lack of ethics the steward was coherent. The criteria of his action are not honesty and justice, nor the good of the master on whom he depends to live and to survive, but it is his own interest. He wants to have the guarantee that there will be someone who will receive him in his house.

- Luke 16, 8: The Master praises the dishonest steward. And look this is the disconcerting conclusion: “The Master praises the dishonest steward for his astuteness: For the children of this world are more astute in dealing with their own kind than are the children of light”. The word Master or Lord indicates Jesus and not the rich man. The latter would never praise a dishonest employee working with him in the service and that now he robs even more, 50 measures of oil and 20 sacks of wheat! In the parable the one who extends the praise is Jesus. He certainly does not praise the theft, but the presence of spirit of the steward. He knew how to calculate things well and finds a way out, when unexpectedly he finds himself without a job. In this way the children of this world know how to be experts in their own things, and in the same way, the children of light should learn from them to be experts in the solution to their problems, using the criteria of the Kingdom and not the criteria of this world. “Be cunning as serpents and innocent as doves” (Mt 10, 16).

#### **4) Personal questions**

- Am I coherent?
- Which criteria do I use in the solution of my problems?

### **5) Concluding prayer**

One thing I ask of Yahweh, one thing I seek:  
to dwell in Yahweh's house all the days of my life,  
to enjoy the sweetness of Yahweh,  
to seek out his temple. (Ps 27,4)