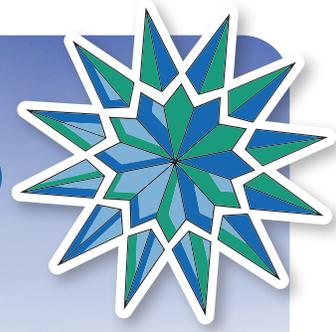


# ALL SAINTS

## CATHOLIC CHURCH & SCHOOL



*Love God • Serve Others • Form Disciples*

**September 20 & September 21, 2025;  
25th Sunday in Ordinary Time**

## *This Week's Homily*

**25th Sunday OT – Cycle C (20-21 September 2025)**

***Where Does the Buck Stop?***

**(Luke 16:1-13)**

As most of you may know, on President Harry Truman's desk, he kept a small but powerful sign that read: "The buck stops here." That sign wasn't just a decoration—it was a personal declaration. Truman believed that leadership meant accountability. And when hard decisions had to be made, Truman didn't pass the blame but rather, he took responsibility. Truman understood that when you're entrusted with authority, you're also entrusted with consequences.

That famous phrase ... "The buck stops here" ... is more than political. Based on today's readings, it's almost spiritual. We as individuals are stewards of all our God given gifts. And stewardship includes responsibility.

In our first reading, the prophet Amos speaks with kind of a hot tongue. Little is known about Amos other than that he came from a small village in Judah, and was a herdsman and farmer of sycamore figs. Amos is dressing down those in the Northern Kingdom who manipulated the poor and twisted justice for financial profit.

It's not about economics but rather ethics. Amos is calling out a society that had lost its moral compass. The people were cheating the vulnerable, exploiting the weak, and trafficking human lives.

And Amos provides a warning... that God sees injustice ... and calls us to do better.

This isn't just ancient history... It also reflects life in our world today. Amos reminds us like the sign on Truman's desk... The buck stops here. We can't ignore injustice. We are called to respond.

In today's Gospel, Luke presents one of Jesus' more puzzling parables—the story of the dishonest steward who's about to be fired. The Steward has been careless ... shady... and possibly even crooked in the way he managed the rich man's property. But when the steward is summoned and told he is being fired, the steward doesn't sit idle in the crisis —he takes immediate action. He starts settling debts and cutting deals with debtors to prepare for his future.

And this is where the parable gets confusing. Strangely, the Master praises him—not for his dishonesty, but for his decisiveness. Jesus commends the steward for recognizing the urgency of the moment.

Jesus isn't saying that it is OK to be dishonest or to cheat others. He's telling us to be awake and not just drift along in life. To stop living like we have endless time on our hands. The steward realized his life was about to change, and he responded. That's the kind of "spiritual alertness" Jesus asks of us.

The Gospel ends with a challenging choice: "You cannot serve both God and mammon." We make our own choices. We decide who we serve, and how we live.

I looked up the median or center-most annual income for individuals living in locations that are possibly of interest for us. Here in Iowa, the median annual income is \$37K. In Haiti – it is just over \$1K (~3% of Iowa rate). This global disparity highlights the vast differences in economic opportunities.

You have heard me say it before ... but we are truly blessed to live where we do. We may not have everything that we want ... but we have so much more than most in the world.

I read an article in the recent Archdiocese "Go Forth" newsletter that Archbishop Thomas traveled last month to Ghana and among other things, had an opportunity to visit St Teresa Hospital and Our Lady of Mt Carmel Girls' Senior High School. You are probably unfamiliar with these places... I know I was. The hospital and school however are supported by donations from two parishes in Dubuque. The article said that the donations from Dubuque were "game-changers". And here at All Saints, our efforts to support to our sister parish in Haiti ... like Saturday's "Run for Pie" continues to be "game changing" for so many in need.

I share this with you because during this week's Journey in Faith meeting, the presenter made a comment about parishes joining together to form pastorates... and of a concern that parish social justice programs could face competition with one another.

We are called to imitate Christ by responding to the needs of others. To act and make a difference by not serving ourselves... but with love, choosing to serve others. We are called to be joyful missionary disciples. Our highly competitive and divisive world can make life seem like a zero-sum game, building up feelings of "us" and "them." Our faith requires eyes that recognize the abundance of God. And with such vision, we can confidently act in trust and with generosity serve our sisters and brothers.

In closing, I'd like to go back to the image of President Truman's sign: "The buck stops here." What does it mean to say, "I will take responsibility... I will act... I will serve"?

That's the invitation of today's Gospel. Not to be perfect, but to be faithful. Not to pass the buck, but to say, "Here I am, Lord."

May we be wise stewards and never forget where the buck stops—in our heart when we say yes to joyfully serving others.

