

Rev. Randall Hubbard, Presider
Deacon Lucio Caruso, Homilist
Jonah 3:1-5, 10
1 Corinthians 7:29-31
Mark 1:14-20

THIRD SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME
January 21-22, 2012
“Net Worth”

So, what's your “net-worth”?

How you answer depends on your definition of it. Webster's is: "the gain after allowances for deductions, losses, or debt." “Net” is what one clears as profit, and “worth,” the value of that profit.

Our culture defines net-worth ideally as “fame and fortune.” But if this is the only way we measure our life’s net-worth, St. Paul reminds us that "the world in its present form is passing away.” To put all our stock in material wealth or the esteem of others is not very wise.

“What profit is there,” says Jesus, “to ‘net’ the whole world, yet fail to grow rich in what matters to God?”- a lesson Christ taught in the parable of that "foolish rich man who builds larger barns to store his excess only to have his very life shortly demanded."

I bet most of us define our net-worth in life as far more than material gain; but to include relationships, family, children, work, impacts for good, our faith...

What is my net-worth? A good question to ponder. How might I answer that question at the end of my life, or to God?

Would God agree with my answer?

Ever wonder what God’s “net-worth” is?

Since God created everything, it's reasonable to assume that "the whole universe" makes up God’s vast net-worth.

But scripture tells us something very different. **God judges divine net-worth in lives saved and redeemed!**

In the reading from that reluctant prophet Jonah, God spares the people when they turn from their evil ways and repent. Jesus begins His public ministry with a summons to repent and believe in the gospel.

Consider the many parables and teachings of Jesus that stress God's desire to save. "Is there not more joy in heaven over a single sinner who repents"? Just one less loss for the Kingdom is of infinite profit to our God.

What an awesome thought! **God's "net-worth" is me and every human being redeemed and saved for God!**

In today's gospel, Jesus extends an incredible invitation, a career change of sorts: **"partnering with Him to increase God's net-worth"**- "to be fishers of people."

Like Jesus, we are to proclaim the good news of the Kingdom by word and actions of charity and justice; all to "reel in" {Lucio uses a net to show catching fish} more and more people for God's great catch!

As the apostles dropped their "familiar nets" and took up that "new net of mission," fishing for souls, so too must we! The abruptness with which they left behind ties and obligations, demonstrates the radical call of the Kingdom.

Dare we - like Simon, Andrew, James, and John - abandon our "safety nets" to follow Christ? Do we trust that what we'll net with Him holds much more lasting worth than anything this "passing world" offers?

The truth is - nothing will make us happier in life than serving with Christ to increase God's net-worth!

And God's net-worth is increased not only by gaining more souls for heaven, but in the many daily ways we better the lives of people "here and now."

Salvation is not just "other worldly." Christ through us makes "the Kingdom of God at hand" when, for example, we...

- Support a family member returning to the Church.

- Take the initiative to mend a broken relationship.
- Serve the poor with dignity and respect.
- Befriend a "left out" classmate at school.
- Encourage and mentor the unemployed through our parish N.E.T. ministry.
- Join with "Catholics at the Capital" to advocate for the Respect of Life.
- Smile and show kindness to people we interact with at work, in stores, or while driving.

Countless opportunities present themselves for us to decrease God's losses and increase God's net-worth. One day, we'll share in that profit fully with God and all the disciples caught and netted for God's eternal Kingdom.

So, what is your - net - worth?