

**“...be like servants who await their master’s return
Blessed are those servants whom the master finds vigilant on his arrival.”**

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

Once upon a time, there was a book called, “The Man Who Lost Himself.” In one scene, the hero trails a man to Paris. He thinks he knows at which hotel the man is staying, but he’s not certain. So, he devises a plan to find out –without arousing anyone’s suspicion.

He decides to give the room-clerk, at the front desk, his own name and then ask if a man by his name is staying in the hotel. Then, as the clerk is looking through the directory, he’ll ‘look over his shoulder,’ so to speak, and check for the name of the man he has been following.

So, when he gets to the hotel, he proceeds to the front desk and gives the clerk... his name. To his utter surprise, the clerk doesn’t bother to check the register. He simply says:

“Yes. He’s staying in room 40; he’s been expecting you. I’ll have the bellhop take you to his room.”

Well, our sleuth-hero is flabbergasted, yet he is anxious to follow the bellhop to room... 40.

When he gets to the room, he gives a tip to the bellhop, knocks on the door, and cannot believe his eyes when the door opens. There, standing before him, is a man.. who is... his exact ‘double’...
except that ...he is grayer, heavier, and about 20 years older.

The man turns out to be the hero himself, 20 years into the future!

The story is, of course, pure fiction, **but** it reveals an important truth –the same important truth today’s Gospel talks about, which I just read to you from St. Luke.

What, exactly, is that important truth today’s Gospel talks about, you ask?

Well, I am glad you asked that question!

The simple answer is ...there is a person out there... in the future ...waiting for each of us.
It is the person we will be 10 or 20 years from now...if we don’t get hit by a truck or the like before then.

To be specific, the question today’s Gospel asks us is this:

**What kind of person will we be... then?
Will we be someone our family will be proud of?
Will we be someone we can be proud of?**

Surprisingly, the answers to such questions are not as hard as one may think.

For example, in which direction are our lives headed right now?

To start, are we less **honest** today than we were a year ago... 5 years ago?

Are we less **understanding** today than we were a year ago...5 years ago?

Are we less **prayerful** than we were a year ago... 5 years ago?

The answers to such questions hold the clue to the person we will be 20 years from now.

There’s an old adage that goes: As the twig is bent, so the tree grows.

In other words, the direction our life is taking now... is probably the direction it will continue going.

Allow me to clarify:

If we are becoming less and less **honest with each passing year...**

we probably won’t be too honest 20 years from now.

If we are becoming less and less **understanding with each passing year...**

we probably won’t be too understanding 20 years from now.

If we are becoming less and less **prayerful with each passing year...**

we probably won’t be too prayerful 20 years from now.

And this brings me to a very important issue:

*If we find ourselves becoming less **honest**, less **understanding**, less **prayerful** –what can we do to change this downhill trend? How can we reverse the direction of our lives?*

The 1st thing we can do –is to admit, frankly, that we are going downhill, at least, in a certain area.

For example, we can admit that we are not as **prayerful** today as we once were.

(Admitting this is not only the 1st step, **but** the hardest & most **important** step. It's difficult to admit to a personal defect/ flaw!)

The 2nd step is to ask God's forgiveness for the defect/flaw. We can do this in prayer. More ideally, we can do this in the Sacrament of Reconciliation.

(This sacrament is one of the greatest gifts of our Catholic faith.

And, it's encouraging to see so many people starting to use it again on a truly, regular basis, rather than only once or twice a year!)

The 3rd step is to begin a concrete program that will change the direction of our lives.

For example, if we are not as **prayerful** as we used to be, we can set aside a few minutes each morning or night for prayer; **schedule it!** If we decide to do this, we should keep at hand a Bible or a book of prayers, perhaps the life of one of the saints. St. Theresa of Avila always began her prayer with a book.

(Suitable books are available from a library or religious bookstore; lives of saints are 'on line.')

For example, if our problem is **impatience**, we can sit down and try to determine what situations, especially, cause us to become impatient. Then we can 'check' ourselves each night on how we handled our impatience that day and ask the Holy Spirit for guidance for the next day.

We can do more.

If we have failed, we can determine why we failed & focus on correcting whatever caused our failure.

Reversing the direction of our lives is not easy; it's no simple thing. **But** with 'desire,' 'commitment,' and with God's help, 'his grace,' we **CAN** do it ...just as many have done before us!

I now close with this prayer:

Lord,
Help us see our lives as you see them
...and as we, ourselves, will see them, without excuse, at the Last Judgment.
Help us see those areas in our lives that need improving ...or changing.
Help us take those steps needed to bring our lives in accord with the life you had in mind for us
...when you created us so many years ago.

May Almighty God, our Abba, bless you, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Amen