



## LIVE WELL – CHANGE OFTEN

33<sup>rd</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time, A

Church of the Holy Angels

5:00 p.m., 8:00 a.m., 12 Noon

1. How many psychiatrists does it take to change a light bulb?
  - One, but it's a slow and tedious process and the light bulb has to really want to be changed!
2. There's the key – the light bulb really has to **WANT** to be changed
  - change is difficult and there are few people in life who really welcome it
  - when we possess something which is good we want to hold onto it just as it is
  - when we are comfortable in our surroundings, secure in our environment, we don't want to think about a change of place or an alteration in our circumstances
  - when things are good, when we experience caring and loving relationships, we don't necessarily want new ideas, we want things to stay the same
  - we think, "things are just fine the way they are. Don't ask me to adjust. Don't ask me to change."
3. The resistance to change is what makes today's gospel parable so important
  - we cannot keep the good things that we have by simply holding onto them
  - thinking we can preserve things just as they are is as foolish as the servant who thinks he will please his master by burying his talent in the ground
  - the fact is, this is not God's way – to keep, hold onto, cling to, or possess
  - God cannot not give
  - God is the ultimate self-surrender, the total giving away of love, God exists in gift form
  - and, as much as we want to hold onto that love, it is only by giving it away, by gifting God to others that we get to grow in holiness, we grow in God's presence
  - strange as it may sound – when you're willing to give everything, you receive more in return
  - and that includes being willing to let go, to risk, to let things change
4. 15 years ago I was sitting pretty at St. Christopher's in Rocky River
  - the pastor and I got along splendidly, I was less than 5 miles from home, had many classmates in the parish and was really happy
  - I thought, "It can't get any better than this! Maybe I can extend beyond my 5 years!"
  - In my prayer sometimes I think about what would have happened had I said, "no," to changing assignments back in 2002 – after only 3 ½ years at St. Chris
  - what if I had said, "going to Holy Angels just doesn't fit into my plans!" "I'm content, I'm settled, I'm comfortable." "Bainbridge – is that near Pennsylvania?" "Leave me alone."
  - I would not have been here today, would not have received so richly and deeply the many blessings over the course of these years, the friendships, the joy, the laughter, the

happiness

- and now I've been asked to say, "yes" again and it involves more change
- and it's harder to do at age 56 than it was at age 41!!!
- But as difficult as that is, I know how faithful God is
- I know what happens when I look beyond my fears, my worries, my hesitation
- I know what happens when we offer our lives as God's gift

5. Our world and our lives are always changing

- a new job, a new home, the loss of a parent or family member, a new set of expectations
- we look at our investments and may have to re-think what we can spend, or how to live differently than we have
- we anticipate the holidays and what it might be like without someone who we've lost this year
- the Church isn't the same it was 30 or 40 years ago
- technology, terrorism, medicine, travel – we've seen tremendous changes
- with new models and paradigms comes challenge and risk

6. But, like it or not, the world is changing and we are expected to change as well

- John Henry Newman once wrote: "to live is to change, and to live well is to change often"
- and change involves risk, and risk isn't easy
- but the good news tells us this: every servant willing to take that risk will succeed admirably
- the only servant who failed was the one who held on tightly to what he had

7. In the end, change is not the enemy

- **FEAR** is
- letting go of the good things we have now will not destroy us
- but pretending that we can keep things exactly as they are, will
- change is difficult, but it is a part of life, and a part of God's plan

8. Take the risk

- be willing to let go and you'll grow
- be generous in giving love – because the more you give, the more you get
- and the less willing you are to risk, the more vulnerable you are to losing it