

**Homily for August 8, 2004
19th Sunday in Ordinary Time (C)**

By Father Charles Bowes

**Wisdom 18:6-9
Ps 33:1, 12, 18-20, 22
Hebrews 11:1-2, 8-19
Luke 12:32-48**

Watching, waiting for the Lord is not merely something we do; it is primarily the way we are, and we tap into it.

There is a play entitled, “Waiting for Godot,” in which nothing happens – twice! Nothing happens in the first act, and nothing happens in the second act. The play is about two people waiting – waiting for the arrival of someone named Godot – a symbol the playwright uses for God. Godot never shows up, but the characters wait.

That’s one theme of our scripture readings this weekend – waiting for God to arrive. The Gospels of Matthew, Mark and Luke all expect the risen Jesus soon to return. But by the time Saint Luke’s gospel was written in about the year 85, folks had pretty much lost a sense of urgency about Jesus’ return. “Just when was this ‘end time’ supposed to happen?” they asked. Folks were dying, and still no second coming. This does not mean that the expectation of Jesus’ return had diminished, but that now it became necessary to place that hope within a broader context of day-to-day living.

So it is that our Gospel today, Luke chapter 12, shows Jesus teaching his followers how to wait – how to wait for God to draw near. This was a lesson

intended for that early church community, and it is for us today, too. Jesus is shown teaching his disciples as they make their way slowly to Jerusalem.

The two examples Jesus uses, that of the servant waiting for his master’s return and that of being alert in case of robbery, teach two things. One is that the reward for being watchful will be utterly amazing. The master, God, will serve the servants! An unthinkable thought in the days when this Gospel was written. And the second lesson Jesus teaches is that God draws near when we least expect it. So be prepared always. Make watchfulness not merely something we do, but our way of life.

How do we do this today amid all the stuff that fills our lives? Simple. Take a moment sometime during the day, around noon or at the end of a day – just before you drift off to sleep – to ask the Lord Jesus a question: “Lord, what do you want me to remember about this day?” And then, be quiet and listen. See what comes to mind. Maybe it will be a person’s face or a remnant of a conversation or something you saw or read. The reward for asking the question can be utterly amazing, peace giving. And then, if you can, spend a further moment just savoring it. Be with that memory, that infallible sacred record keeping, that holy moment,

that gift of God drawing near. This ability to watch and wait for God is built right into every human being and goes on in every moment of every day. All we're doing is allowing God to speak and reveal what is going on always and everywhere – the Spirit of the Risen Lord as near and as available as our own hearts. All we need to do is ask the question. God does the rest.

A wise man once said, "I do not want merely to possess a faith; I want a faith to possess me." And that's what happens when watching, waiting for the Lord is not merely something we do, but is primarily the way we are...and we tap into it.