

Dear Brothers and Sisters



“After a long time, the master of those servants came back and settled accounts with them.”

After how long? What is a long time anyway? Time can be measured according to what we do with it – we speak of ‘time well spent,’ or ‘a waste of time.’ Time can also be reckoned according to the task at hand. If, you sit still without moving, not even an inch, not even to scratch your nose, then fifteen minutes seems like a lifetime. But we can spend hours doing something we like, and time flies.

Sometimes minutes can seem unending, yet years can contract and literally fly by. Do you remember graduating high school? You wondered where the last eighteen years went. Or when you celebrate your twenty fifth wedding

anniversary, you look back and wonder where the time went.

How long is a long time? A day, a week, a year, twenty years, fifty, or ninety years?

It depends. But for God time does not exist. God lives in the present. The Christian also lives in the present: yesterday is gone, tomorrow does not belong to us, all we have is this moment, today.

And in this ‘today’, whether that be now, or in fifteen minutes time, or eighteen years from now, or at the end of our life, God comes to us: “the master of those servants comes back”.

If we are sincere, we do not think of ourselves as servants.

The word ‘servant’ has been purged from modern diction. Servants used to exist, those unfortunates who performed menial tasks, the underlings, the bottom of the ladder, those whose lot in life was to wait on others.

We are above all that. Servants no longer exist, except perhaps in third world countries, who have yet to experience the emancipation from servitude. Or so we think....

I once celebrated Mass with the children in our Faith Formation Programs, and, reflecting together with them on the Gospel of that day, I asked them who they were called to serve. Connor, a six-year-old, said he was called to serve Jack, his four-year-old brother. Can you believe that? Then other children explained how they could serve their parents, relatives, or the other kids in school. What discernment! All of them spoke with faith, being very concrete in their examples.

Cardinal John Henry Newman's poem “The Dream of Gerontius” tells of the journey of a man's soul after death - Gerontius may be translated roughly as old man.

There will be a settling of accounts for each of us. Our old man, our old woman will make this journey, this transitus, part of which will be a settling of accounts. The good news is that this journey has already begun, and the accounts are already being settled.

They are settled first of all by Christ, who came “not to be served, but to serve.”

We will be judged not on how many people served us, but on how many people we served. We can only serve others if we have been served by Him. We do not need to wait five minutes, a year, or ninety years for that to happen. Christ serves each one of us today. As a consequence, our old man, our old woman, can find true freedom in service of others. Who are you serving today?

Fr. Sean