

Fr Ben's Weekly Reflection

33rd Sunday Ordinary Time

Nov 15, 2026

A Two Commandment Sin

"The grass is always greener on the other side of the fence" is the common saying for wishing we had some other life. Or you could say "watch out for the green-eyed monster." These both boil down to simply being "green with envy." Maybe the problem is just green…I don't know. However you want to put it, we can waste a lot of our lives on envy or wistfully pining away on our past or what others have.
It's not explicit, but this Sunday's Gospel speaks to this point. One servant gets 5 talents (if gold, worth about $20 million from a conversion website I found) while one servant gets 1. The servant with one buries the talent and pouts. The other two get to work for their master to grow his wealth and get rewarded.

Envy is a serious sin that leads to coveting (sinful desiring). This sin gets two commandments dedicated to it: "thou shall not covet your neighbor's wife" and "thou shall not covet thy neighbor's goods." We could argue "I was only **looking**, I didn't **do** anything." Sorry, Jesus expanded envy and coveting when He said "a man who looks at another woman with lust in his heart has already committed adultery with her." This goes both ways of course and also applies to goods. Ultimately, the longer we stay in our envy, desires, and coveting, the more trapped we become.

The saints are good examples of the faithful servants in the parable. I like the lives of the saints and this weekend (November 14th) is a new one I didn't know about, Saint Laurence O'Toole. He was the first native Irish bishop of Dublin in 1162AD. He was a monk who didn't want to be bishop but eventually accepted. He spent most of his time reforming the Church in Dublin as well as negotiating peace with Norman invaders. Not very flashy and mostly forgotten in a time when you have St. Thomas Aquinas, St. Bonaventure, and other big "five talent" saints. He was faithful to his calling where he was at as a "one" or "two talent" saint.

Saints are not sad. Saints also didn't spend their lives longing to be someone else or live a different life. Saints rolled up their sleeves and got to work where they were at. That is what we are supposed to do too. The longer we envy that promotion our co-worker got or the yields our neighbor got in the field *right next to ours*, the more stuck and miserable we will be.

Doing the work and living the life we have been given is the treasure the Master has given us. Let's not waste it or our time and get to work faithfully being disciples of Jesus Christ.