

WHO WILL GET THE PRIZE?

*From: "Stories, Parables and Fables of Life" of P. Ribes, s.j.
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Intent of the story

- ✓ *Before God all men and women have the same value*
- ✓ *Before God is not so much what we do, but how we do it, that counts*
- ✓ *Life on earth and all we do or may do is transitory and temporal. .*
- ✓ *There is no other absolute except God, his love and his will.*

Target Audience:

All Christian audiences.
Specially the young.
Those who cannot find meaning in their lives.

Uses of these Notes:

Recollections.
Talks on Vocation.
Catechism classes.

The Story

In a remote village, on the occasion of their Annual Feast, a dramatic competition was held. Prizes would be given to best actors.

In the plays staged, one could find a very large cast of actors. The plays were meant to portray, as vividly as possible, scenes of day-to-day life. On the performances, successively, Kings and Queens, Priests and Holy Sadhus, Doctors and Patients, Parents and Teachers, Beggars and Drunkards made their appearance on the stage.

It was, indeed, a magnificent dramatic display of scenes true to life. The onlookers gathered in the main village square were attentively looking at the performances and eagerly waiting to hear who the award winners would be. During the plays, the actors, appearing and disappearing in the stage, with their costumes and make-ups, were vying for the first prizes.

At the end of the competition, the judges declared the awards. The first prize went to the "Beggar". The second prize to the "Drunkard" and the third prize to the "School Boy". The audience gave a thunderous clap to the winners.

However, when the clapping faded, the King, still with his Royal attire stood up in the middle of the stage and angrily shouted at the Judges: "Unfair! Unfair!" I cannot accept your decision. I am the King! How could you give the first prize to

a miserable beggar and bypass me? Is this the way you honor your king? I claim the prize!”

Soon after, the Holy Sadhu got up and screamed: “You have done injustice to me! I am a Holy Sadhu. How could you give a prize to a Drunkard and have forgotten me, a man of God?? Is this way, you, judge’s care for holiness, goodness and godliness?”

The simple folk and bystanders in amazement, kept looking at each other; then with disbelief, they at the make belief King and at the self proclaimed Man of God, they shrugged their shoulders and had a good laughter at the King and at the Holy Sadhu.

(Story inspired in the Spanish Classic “El Gran Teatro del Mundo”)

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION AND DISCUSSION

1. Can we say that the entire human life and history on earth is like a play? Why?
2. What would be the “Stage”? The “Players”? And the “Roles” to play?
3. Who is the “Script-writer” and “The Director” of the play? How?
4. Who is the great jury to decide the prize winners?
5. What are the norms the jury will flow to judge the worth of our performances?
6. Are the roles we play and the external trappings of our earthly life the most important things in life? Why?
7. Then, what is the most important thing? Explain.
8. What will be the norm the Jury will use to judge the worthiness of our playing?
9. What name we ordinarily give to the role God wants us to play? Why do we call it like this?
10. How many roles are there in our world, we can play? Mention some.
11. Which is the best role for each one of us to play? Why?
12. How can you find the role God wants you to play?
13. What is meant by the sentence: “We have to discern our role” or vocation”?
14. What is the most important attitude of mind and heart to be able to discern our role and play it to perfection? Why?
15. At the end of life, to whom will God give the 1st prize? To the King or to the Beggar? To the Holy man or to the Repentant Sinner? Why?

THOUGHTS FOR AN INPUT:

- The world is like a huge stage where all of us make our appearance, where we have a role to play
- At the end of life, we shall receive our reward.

- God is the “Script-Writer” and the “Director” of the play. In a true, yet mysterious way, he chooses a role for each us to play.
- Each one’s role in the stage of life is irreplaceable. We have a unique place and a unique task in life.
- The “all important thing” is not the role we play, but how well we play it.
- Each one's role is unique and irreplaceable. No one is left out of the plan of God. All and each - rich and poor, healthy and sick, educated and uneducated; married and single; priest and layman - have a role to play.
- There are many possible vocations and roles in life - marriage, priesthood, religious life, and celibate life.
- There are many jobs and services to be done in the world- teaching, nursing, preaching, helping, building, health services, engineering, manual work, intellectual work, etc.
- As Christians, all of us have "a role" to play. Which? How to find it out?
- How to discern one's vocation and the work one has to do on the stage of life?
- Before God, there are not honorable Kings and dishonorable beggars. All are the same.
- Before God what counts is not what great person you are nor what position you hold, but how good you are at heart
- Before God we are equal men and women made to his likeness.
- Roles are not “ends” in themselves, but only “means” given to us by God to love Him, serve Him, and to make our world a better place to be.
- We have to search out and find out what’s the role the Lord assigned for each one of us. We have to “discern our vocation” in life
- In order to find our Vocation, our role, we have to be prepared to accept his will and choice for us – whatever it may be – even, if humanly speaking, is the lowest and least honorable.
- Great generosity is wanted to accept our role and act on it in faith and enthusiasm.
- Life, like any stage performance, has value, but only a passing and a temporarily one.
- At the end of our lives we shall have leaved behind the stage, our stage trappings and stand, so to say, naked before God.
- Death is the drawing off the curtain at the end of our performance in this world.

POINTS FOR PERSONAL EXAMINATION.

Am I a good Christian? Do I live up to my "Chris-tian Vocation" as Jesus expects me?

Could I play my role on the stage of life, in a better way? How?

Am I happy being what I am?

Is God asking me to do something more for Him now? What is it? Are you ready?

What are the difficulties I may encounter? How to overcome them?

PRAYER SERVICE

You may base the prayer service on any or on all the following texts:

- Our Lady's role on the stage of the world. Lk 1:18-25
- St Peter's role. Lk 5: 1 -11; Mt 16:13-20
- St Paul's vocation. Acts 9:1-18
- John the Baptist's vocation. Lk 1:5-25; 57-66; 3:1-20; 7:18-35
- The Parable of the three servants. Mt 25: 14-30
- The Prudent and the Foolish Virgins Mt 25:1-13

The Gospel passages mentioned above could be very well read, commented upon or even acted at the prayer service

Encourage the participants to share their personal reflections and insights.

Enjoin the participants to pray for one another.