**Stewardship Reflections**

**CYCLE A**

**ADVENT**

**First Sunday of Advent**

*“Therefore, stay awake! For you do not know on which day your Lord will come.” Matthew 24:42*

People who have had health issues or near-death experiences generally have a greater appreciation for each day being a gift from God. The rest of us usually take for granted that we will be around tomorrow. But when you start to look at each day as a gift, you realize all the little miracles that happen daily and you begin to see God’s active presence in your life. You grow in gratitude, each day, for all that we have been given.

**Second Sunday of Advent**

“Therefore, every tree that does not bear good fruit will be cut down and thrown into the fire.”    Matthew 3:10

Do you bear good fruit for Christ?  Or do you spend your time, talent and treasure constantly acquiring more toys, clutter and junk.  Our time, our talent and our treasure are gifts that God has given us.  What we do with them is our gift back to God.  What gifts are you planning to give to the Lord during this upcoming Christmas season?

**Third Sunday of Advent**

“You too must be patient.  Make you hearts firm, because the coming of the Lord is at hand.” JAMES 5:8

Patience is another one of those things many of us struggle with.  We want things to go according to our plan and our schedule.  Any change brings anxiety and fear.  Through daily prayer we better align ourselves with God’s will and His plan, which is far better than anything we can come up with on our own.

**Fourth Sunday of Advent**

“When Joseph awoke, he did as the angel of the Lord had commanded him and took his wife into his home.”  MATTHEW 1:24

Putting our complete trust in the Lord without expecting anything in return.  Striving to put God first in all things and follow Him wherever He may led us.  As we prepare for the birth of our Lord, pray for the strength and courage to be a model of discipleship, just as Joseph was.

**CHRISTMAS TIME**

**Christmas Day**

“And the Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us…” JOHN 1:14 God made his Stewards to be in relationship with Him. He loves each of us individually. Through sin, our relationship with God was broken. He gave us Jesus to restore our relationship. Being a disciple of Jesus, we are given the model to obtain eternal life in Heaven. Christmas isn’t about the material gifts we receive, it’s about the love that God, Our Father, gave us by giving us His Son, Jesus – the best gift we could ever receive.

**New Year’s Day**

*“Wives, be subordinate to your husbands…Husbands, love your wives…Children, obey your parents in everything…Fathers, do not provoke your children…” colossians 3:18-21*

Pope Francis said that families, through their life of prayer and love, become “schools of true human growth.” Being credible witnesses of Christian love, especially that of family members, exerts the most positive influence on our children. We are all children of God, let us pray and love each other as God, Our Father, does for us.

**Epiphany**

*“Then they opened their treasures and offered him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh.” Matthew 2:11*

The image of the Magi kneeling before the infant Jesus and opening their treasure chests for Him is an image that we should all try to follow each day. In gratitude for all that we have been given, we are called to generously share all of our gifts, not just the ones we pick and choose. God wants us to be generous with everything, but especially that one thing that means the most to you.

**LENT**

**First Sunday of Lent**

*“It is written: The Lord, your God, shall you worship and him alone shall you serve.” Matthew 4:10*

Tempted between the riches and power of this world and service to God, Jesus chose service to His Father. If we wish to truly follow Jesus, we, too, must decide to turn away from worldly power and riches and put God at the center of our lives. Lent is our time to prune ourselves of earthly things. Ask God how he is calling you to serve.

**Second Sunday of Lent**

*“Go forth from the land of your kinsfolk and from your father’s house to a land that I will show you.” Genesis 12:1*

God calls all of us to leave behind our old ways and to follow Him, placing our complete trust in Him. Some of the old ways that we may have to struggle to leave behind might be materialism, selfishness and greed. Yet God promises to show us a new land and a better way to live. Remember what St. Teresa of Calcutta said, “God does not call us to be successful, God calls us to be faithful.”

**Third Sunday of Lent**

*“Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again.” John 4:13*

Jesus reminds us that material things, even something as basic as water, can never satisfy us for long. When we build our lives around material possessions we always want more. True Joy and Peace only comes when we follow Jesus; when we become more “God-centered” and less “self-centered”.

**Fourth Sunday of Lent**

*“Not as man sees does God see, because man sees the appearance but the Lord looks into the heart.” 1Samuel 16:7*

How often do we invest our time, talent and treasure in creating an appearance that does not matter at all to God? We strive to impress with our clothing, home, career, possessions, car and other marks of distinction. But none of these illusions of greatness will impress God. Instead, He will look into our hearts to see how much we loved Him, how much we loved others and how we showed that love by the way we used our time, talent and treasure here on earth.

**Fifth Sunday of Lent**

*“Jesus said to her, ‘Did I not tell you that if you believe you will see the glory of God?” JOHN 11:40*

Many of us say that we believe in God. We go to church on Sunday. We volunteer for events at our parish. But when life gets hard, the pressure is on, when things aren’t going our way, do we really believe, do we really put our trust in the Lord? When we live a life of gratitude, being thankful for the gifts we have been given, we really do see that God is providing all that we need. It opens our hearts to see God’s active presence in our daily lives.

**Passion (Palm) Sunday**

*“As they were marching out, they came upon a man of Cyrene, Simon by name; this man they pressed into service to carry his cross.” Matthew 27:32*

The Lord calls us to love God and to love our neighbor. Every day we are presented with opportunities to love our neighbor and help him “carry his cross”. These opportunities aren’t usually big events, they are usually ordinary occurrences like helping someone carry their groceries or holding the door open for them. The key is putting the other person’s needs before our own and not expecting anything in return.

**EASTER TIME**

**Easter Sunday**

*“Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth.” Colossians 3:2*

Do you put God first in all things? Possessions, money, power, ego can easily become gods to many of us. Do a quick check of what is important to you. Is God at the very top of the list? If not, your priorities need to be re-adjusted. Don’t let earthly things become a god before God. This is also the first commandment – I am the Lord your God, you shall not have any strange gods before me.

**Second Sunday of Easter**

*“Jesus came and stood among them and said to them, ‘Peace be with you.’”* *John 20:19*

Are you good at making people feel welcome? When you meet someone new, like a new neighbor, a new work colleague or a new parishioner, do you make them feel at home? Many of us can probably do a much better job at this. When we make people feel welcome, we make them feel like they are included instead of being excluded. We are made for relationships – with God and each other. A simple “hello” and a smile goes a long way.

**Third Sunday of Easter**

“Did not our hearts burn within us while He talked to us on the road, while He opened to us the scriptures?” *LUKE 24:32*

How often do we take the time to discern what Jesus wants from us? Are our prayers always petitions, asking Jesus to do things for us? If so, that’s a one-sided relationship. Living our faith means developing a personal relationship with Jesus. Just like any friendship, there is give and take, each side listening to each other and helping each other out. Take time in silence to listen to what Jesus is asking of you.

**Fourth Sunday of Easter**

*“And Peter said to them, ‘Repent, and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ…” Acts 2:38*

The word “repent” means to turn from sin, to change our actions. Change that is permanent comes from within. It requires prayer, discipline and perseverance. Change is also hard. We have to recognize that we are broken and need help. The good news - we are not alone in our journey. Ask Jesus daily for guidance and patiently listen for his response.

**Fifth Sunday of Easter**

*“The stone which the builders rejected has become the cornerstone.” 1 PETER 2:7*

Every person has been given gifts from the Holy Spirit. These are called “charisms” and they are used to build God’s kingdom of earth. While many people are able to recognize their natural talents and abilities, they may be unsure of their charisms. If you know someone who is struggling for a direction in life, give them a little encouragement. Help them discern their charisms and how God is calling them to use them. Remember - no gift is too small or insignificant in God’s salvation plan.

**Sixth Sunday of Easter**

*“For it is better to suffer for doing good, if that be God’s will, than for doing evil.” 1 PETER 3:17*

The old line says “if you want to make God laugh, tell him your plans.” Many of us are diligent in our planning and making sure things are progressing smoothly. Then disaster strikes, we don’t get the result that was intended or an unforeseen problem arises. Many times we may respond negatively and ask, “Why me? I did everything right!” Here’s the thing – adversity humbles us and reminds us of our dependence on God and not on our own self-reliance. Rest assured, God has a better plan in store for you.

**Seventh Sunday of Easter**

“I am praying for them…”   JOHN 17: 9

Prayer is the foundation of our Faith and the foundation of Stewardship.  Pray in good times and in bad.   Prayer is always the first best option in any situation, not just the last resort.  Pray for friends and family and for those that don’t treat you very well.  Pray to give praise, to thank and to ask God for help.  Pray to see what God wants you to do with the gifts He has given you.

**Pentecost Sunday**

*“To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good.” 1 CORINTHIANS 12:7*

*To receive the gift of the Holy Spirit you must open your heart and invite Him in! Ask the Holy Spirit to guide your thoughts, words and actions every day! Be grateful for all the gifts God has given you! Regardless of our individual circumstances, God has given all of us many blessings. What we do with those gifts is our gift back to God! By generously sharing everything we have and everything we are, we become more “God-centered” and less “self-centered” and our lives truly reflect God’s light, love and mercy.*

**First Sunday after Pentecost / Holy Trinity Sunday**

*“For God so loved the world that He gave His only Son…”JOHN 3:16*

Is your love conditional? Is there a price others have to pay to receive your love and forgiveness? Are you generous with your time, skills, money and possessions? If you give someone something, do you expect something in return? Do you give your time freely or do you “fit it in” when it’s convenient for you? God desires a personal relationship with us so much that He gave us His Son, unconditionally! Pray for a grateful and generous heart.

**Body and Blood of Christ**

*“Because there is one bread, we, who are many, are one body, for we all partake of the one bread.”1 CORINTHIANS 10:17*

As disciples of Jesus, we are called to lead holy lives and invite others to join us. We are called to be fed and to feed others. Living a stewardship lifestyle, being grateful and generous with our gifts, serves a twofold purpose. One, it helps build God’s kingdom here on earth. Two, it helps us strengthen each other’s relationship with God the Father, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit. It becomes our roadmap to Heaven. Let’s help each other get there!

**ORDINARY TIME**

**First Sunday / Baptism of our Lord**

**Second Sunday**

*“Now the Lord has spoken who formed me as his servant from the womb...”Isaiah 49:5*

God have given each of us different gifts. In order for God’s plan to work, you have to do what God is calling you to do and I have to do what God is calling me to do. And guess what? God has given each of us a different plan! So, stop comparing yourself to others. Don’t let envy and jealousy enter your life. Be thankful for the gifts God has given you and become the saint that God is calling you to be.

**Third Sunday**

*“He called them, and immediately they left their boat and their father and followed Him.” Matthew 4:22*

Just as Jesus called the first apostles, He calls each of us to follow Him, too. Not everyone is called to leave their business or family behind, but we are expected to put God first in everything. In gratitude to God, we should give our first and best of everything to Him: our time in daily prayer, our talent in participating in one of our parish ministries and our treasure to support the financial needs of our parish mission.

**Fourth Sunday**

*“Brothers and sisters: I should like you to be free of anxieties.” - 1 Corinthians 7:32*

How much anxiety do we bring upon ourselves by constantly worrying about not having enough or attaining more things? God won’t necessarily give you everything you want, but He will provide everything you need. Try this – use the word “pray” instead of the word “worry” in the future.

**Fifth Sunday**

*“Let your light shine before others, that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven.” MATTHEW 5:16*

The generosity of being a good steward of your gifts has a positive effect on people and it is contagious! Good works encourages more good works. Let your light shine! Be careful to recognize that God is working through you and don’t put yourself above the people you have been called to help.

**Sixth Sunday**

*“For I tell you, unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.” MATTHEW 5:20*

The scribes and Pharisees lived according to the letter of the law and they used this to elevate themselves above the other people. Jesus is clear – it’s the love that you have in your heart that will get you to heaven. Simply following church rules out of obligation, not love, does not put you on the path to heaven. Attending Mass on Sunday and then gossiping about a fellow parishioner on the parking lot is an example of a modern day Pharisee.

**Seventh Sunday**

*“But I say to you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you…” MATTHEW 5:44*

Love your enemies, easier said than done, no doubt. But, remember, the foundation of stewardship is prayer. When we are in close communication with God, it opens our heart and it turns our attention away from “me” and moves it towards God and others. It allows us to have a little more empathy for “our enemy”. When we pray for others, even “our enemies”, maybe it softens their hearts as well.

**Eighth Sunday**

*“No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon (material wealth).” MATTHEW 6:24*

For many people, God and money run “neck and neck” as their first priority. Making money and spending money becomes the center of their life and they actually become a slave to money. The solution – become more generous. Giving money to Church and charity frees us from slavery to money and from making money a “god” before God.

**Ninth Sunday**

**Tenth Sunday**

**11th Sunday**

*“As you go, make this proclamation: ‘The kingdom of heaven is at hand.’” Matthew 1o:7*

Many of us take our lives for granted. We think we have plenty of time to “repent.” Maybe we should live with a little more urgency in making things right with God. This is the difference in living our discipleship out of obligation versus out of love. Obligation implies we do the minimum required. Love implies we want a relationship. God wants us to be with Him in Heaven forever, but He also wants to be in relationship with us right now, while we are on earth. Start this second – invite the Lord into your heart.

**12th Sunday**

*“Everyone who acknowledges me before others I will acknowledge before my heavenly Father.” MATTHEW 10:32*

Would others know that you are Catholic by the way you act and speak? Do you share your Catholic faith with others? Do you defend your Catholic faith when the situation arises or do you remain silent? Do you pray in public before meals? Pray for the strength and courage to be a joyful witness of our Catholic faith when the opportunity presents itself. Let us become the radiant light and bold witness that we are called to be!

**13th Sunday**

*“…whoever does not take up his cross and follow after me is not worthy of me.”* *Matthew 1o:38*

Pope Benedict XVI said “The world offers you comfort. But you were not made for comfort, you were made for greatness”. “Comfort” puts me first. “Picking up your cross and following Jesus” puts God and others first. Why settle for comfort when you can achieve greatness! Pick up your cross, ask Jesus for guidance on using your gifts and live the life of **Stewardship** God intended for you!

**14th Sunday**

*“For my yoke is easy, and my burden light.”* - *Matthew 11:30*

When we think of being good Stewards, we may think that God is asking too much of us when He calls us to generously share our time, talent and treasure. However, we must remember that we are not “owners” of anything, we are merely “stewards” of the gifts God have given us. All He is asking is that we give back a small portion, in gratitude, of what He has already given to us.

**15th Sunday**

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**16th Sunday**

*“The kingdom of heaven may be likened to a man who sowed good seed in his field…He who sows good seed is the Son of Man, the field is the world, the good seed the children of the kingdom.” - Matthew 13:24, 37-38*

As children of God, we are all “good seeds”. We are blessed by God with the Stewardship potential to accomplish much good in the world. We fulfill God’s plan when we spend time in prayer every day, use our skills to help others and share our financial gifts to help build God’s kingdom on earth. Through our example of gratitude and generosity we sow “good seeds” on earth and ultimately help each other get to Heaven!

**17th Sunday**

*“We know that all things work for good for those who love God, who are called according to his purpose.” - Romans 8:28*

Do you really trust God? Do you really believe that in our Stewardship God will provide all that you need? Faith is a challenge for everyone at times. Putting our trust in God, in everything we do, in good times and in bad, means that God’s plan for our lives may be quite different than what we planned. When one door closes, another one opens. Trust in God, His plan is always better.

**18th Sunday**

**19th Sunday**

*“He said, ‘Come.’ Peter got out of the boat and began to walk on the water toward Jesus.” - Matthew 14:29*

When we hear Jesus calling, do we respond as Stewards and trust that He knows what He’s doing? If so, we are walking on water! When we say “yes” to Jesus, we feel the power of his presence in our lives. We can feel the freedom it gives us! Listen how Jesus is calling you to live the extraordinary life He has intended for you.

**20th Sunday**

*“For the gifts and the call of God are irrevocable.” - Romans 11:29*

God has a special mission in mind for each of us. He has given us the gifts we need to accomplish that mission. We are called to be good **Stewards** by using those gifts to do the work that He has planned for each of us. If we deny our gifts or fail to use them as God calls us to use them, then some part of His work will be left undone. Each of us has a part in God’s salvation plan.

**21st Sunday**

*“Or who has given the Lord anything that he may be repaid?” - Romans 11:35*

St. Paul reminds us of a central fact of **Stewardship**. We cannot give God anything - He already owns it all. God made everything, including us. Since we are made in His image, we too, are called to be generous. How we use our God-given gifts becomes our gift back to Him. Gratitude for all we have been given opens our hearts to joyful generosity! And, through our generosity, we just may be the answer to someone else’s prayer.

**22nd Sunday**

*“What profit would there be for one to gain the whole world and forfeit his life?” - Matthew 16:26*

St. Francis of Assisi said, *“Remember, you are what you are in the eyes of God, and nothing else.”* We often forget this Stewardship wisdom when we spend all of our time, talent and treasure to gain more of the world’s riches. We need to set our priorities based on God’s values and not the values of the material world.

**23rd Sunday**

*“You, son of man, I have appointed watchman for the house of Israel…” - Ezekiel 33:7*

Many Stewards are generous with our gifts. However, many of us are not generous in proportion to the gifts we have been given. How often do we give at the minimum level required? Remember, the Lord calls us to nurture and develop our gifts and to give back with increase. He calls us to be generous with all the gifts, especially the one that means the most to us.

**24th Sunday**

*“For if we live, we live for the Lord, and if we die, we die for the Lord; so then, whether we live or die, we are the Lord’s.” – Romans 14:8*

This is the essence of Stewardship – everything we have and everything we are is a gift from God. We aren’t “owners” of anything, we are merely “Stewards” of the gifts that God has given us, especially our very own lives. Pray to God, daily, and ask Him how He is calling you to the live the life that He intended for you.

**25th Sunday**

*“Thus, the last will be first, and the first will be last”. - Matthew 20:16*

You’ve heard the saying “it’s not where you start, but how you finish.” This certainly applies to this Bible passage. We have a responsibility not only for our own lives, but for the lives of others as well. We are called in Stewardship to generously share our gifts with others, not hoard them for our own use. Our sincere gratitude and cheerful generosity will help us live “God-centered” lives and not “self-centered” lives.

**26th Sunday**

**27th Sunday**

*“The stone the builders rejected has become the corner stone…”* - *Matthew 21:42*

Jesus was rejected by the religious and political leaders of his day, as well as ordinary citizens. Living a stewardship lifestyle may cause you to be “rejected” by others in today’s society. For example, saying grace before a meal in a restaurant may attract some strange looks from some. But to others it is sign that God is alive and well!

**28th Sunday**

*“My God will supply whatever you need…” - Philippians 4:19*

God really does provide for those who are grateful and generous. This is very difficult for people that don’t live a stewardship lifestyle to believe. People are skeptical and say it’s just coincidence. If you are skeptical, try living a stewardship lifestyle for just one month – be generous with your gifts of time in prayer, talent in charitable works and treasure and see how God provides for your needs.

**29th Sunday**

*“Render therefore to Caesar the things that are Caesar’s and to God the things that are God’s.”  
 - Matthew 22:21*

Everything we are and everything we have belongs to God. We aren’t “owners” of anything, we are merely “stewards” of the gifts God has given each of us. All God is asking is that we give back a portion of what He gave us. This is the essence of Stewardship. God should be our first priority in everything. All else comes second, especially our money.

**30th Sunday**

*“You shall love the Lord, your God, with all your heart, with all your soul and with all your mind.” – Matthew 22:37*

Do you put other “gods” before God? Is your love of money, power, status, comfort or some personal possession greater than your love for God? Do you really recognize that everything you have and that everything you are is a gift from God? The good news – it’s not too late to put God first in all things in your life.

**31st Sunday**

*”Blessed are you when they insult you and persecute you and utter every kind of evil against you (falsely) because of me.” - Matthew 5:11*

We are all at different points on the path to holiness, on getting to Heaven and becoming a saint. Part of the journey is being mocked and ridiculed by others. When this happens, how do you respond? Do you become silent? Do you react in anger or do you react with love? Fortunately, as one Body of Christ, we are united with the saints already in Heaven. Ask your favorite saint for guidance in defending the Faith.

**32nd Sunday**

*“Therefore, stay awake, for you know neither the day nor the hour.” - Matthew 25:13*

Many of us have put off doing something because we think we are too busy. We’ve all said, “I’ll do it later when I have time.” Unfortunately, too many of us apply this attitude to our Faith. Jesus’ call is urgent, in the here and now, in your current circumstances. Don’t delay. How is God calling you to use your gifts today? None of us is guaranteed tomorrow.

**33rd Sunday**

*“Well done, my good and faithful servant. Since you have been faithful in small matters, I will give you great responsibilities.”- MATTHEW 25:21*

God calls us to nurture and develop the gifts He has given us and then generously return a portion with increase. He doesn’t want us to waste or hoard the gifts He has given us. He expects us to grow our gifts, use them wisely and be generous with them. Unfortunately, many of us are not generous in proportion to all that God has given us.

**CYCLE B**

**ADVENT**

**First Sunday of Advent**

“You do not know when the lord of the house is coming, whether in the evening….or in the morning. May he not come suddenly and find you sleeping.” Mark 13:35-36

The good steward is always expected to have the affairs of the master in order at all times. There is no time for complacency. Stewardship entails readiness to serve others and vigilance in that service.

**Second Sunday of Advent**

“But according to his promise we await new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells.” 2 Peter 3:13

Advent is not a passive waiting, but an active preparation for a new heaven and new earth. Like John the Baptist, we must prepare the way of the Lord. In their pastoral letter on stewardship, the U.S. Bishops emphasize that we are active co-workers in God's creative plan.

**Third Sunday of Advent**

“Rejoice always. Pray without ceasing. In all circumstances give thanks, for this is the will of God for you in Christ Jesus.” 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18

The opposite of stewardship is self-pity and ingratitude. Stewardship is about gratitude, rendering constant thanks, and being aware of how much we've received. With that realization, giving from abundance becomes natural.

**Fourth Sunday of Advent**

“Mary said, “Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord. May it be done to me according to your word.” Then the angel departed from her.” Luke 1:38

It is through Mary's “YES” that the promise of the prophets finds fulfillment. Mary serves as a role model for all stewards.

**CHRISTMAS TIME**

**Christmas**

“And the Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us, and we saw his glory, the glory as of the Father’s only Son, full of grace and truth.” John 1:14

Christmas is the celebration of God’s greatest gift: His only Son. No matter what we consider our personal gifts and generosity, we will never be able to give more than this.

**Holy Family**

“So it was that there came forth from one man….descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky and as countless as the sands on the seashore.” Hebrews 11:12

God will never be outdone in generosity. Through faith, selflessness, and generosity we are promised abundant blessings beyond anything we can imagine.

**Mary, Mother of God**

“Then the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, just as it had been told to them.” Luke 2:20

From early childhood, we are taught to say ‘thank you’ when receiving a gift. As we grow older, more mature ways are learned to express appreciation. When receiving God’s blessings, do we remember to thank Him? Even the lowly shepherds at the time of Jesus’ birth returned to glorify and praise God for the gift of infant Jesus.

**Epiphany**

“On entering the house they saw the child with Mary his mother. They knelt down and did him homage. Then they opened their treasures and offered him with gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh.” Matthew 2:11

The wise men shared their treasures in thanksgiving for God's great gift to world. Are we willing share our treasures in praise and thanksgiving to God?

**LENT**

**First Sunday of Lent**

“….he also went to preach to the spirits in prison, who had once been disobedient while God patiently waited….” 1 Peter 3:19-20

Regardless of whether one has been a good steward of gifts in the past, it is never too late to begin sharing with a generous heart. Decide how you will use your blessings of time, talent, and treasure in service to God, the source of all blessings. Begin small if necessary, but begin!

**Second Sunday of Lent**

“He who did not spare his own Son but handed him over for us all, how will he not also give us everything else along with him?” Romans 8:32

God our Heavenly Father gave us His most beloved gift of all, His very Son. When we give from what we most cherish, we too share Christ with others.

**Third Sunday of Lent**

“To those who sold doves he said, “Take these out of here, and stop making my Father’s house a marketplace.”” John 2:16

Does my own use of time, talent, and treasure reflect my true priorities? In other words, do I have a marketplace mentality – *me centered* – or do I have a stewardship mentality – *other centered*?

**Fourth Sunday of Lent**

“For we are his handiwork, created in Christ Jesus for the good works that God has prepared in advance, that we should live in them.” Ephesians 2:10

Our good deeds go beyond just giving money to charity. Stewardship is not about how we spend our money, but about how we spend our lives.

**Fifth Sunday of Lent**

“Amen, amen, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains just a grain of wheat; but if it dies, it produces much fruit.” John 12:24

We should never be afraid to give of ourselves. The Gospel assures us that we will be rewarded. Saint Teresa of Calcutta is purported to have said, “We can only take to Heaven, that which we give away on earth.”

**Passion (Palm) Sunday**

“He went about doing good and healing all those oppressed by the devil, for God was with him.” Acts 10:38

An astute observer once defined stewardship as “preaching by example.” Christ's good works, His example, remain His most eloquent preaching. The same is true for us.

**EASTER TIME**

**Easter Sunday**

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**Second Sunday of Easter**

“The community of believers was of one heart and mind, and no one claimed that any of his possessions was his own, but they had everything in common.” Acts 4:32

The Christian community described in Acts understood and practiced total stewardship. The believers did not claim personal ownership but held everything in common. Stewardship not only involves sharing our possessions with others, but also sharing our ownership of those possessions with God.

**Third Sunday of Easter**

“Then he said to them, “Why are you troubled? And why do questions arise in your hearts?”” Luke 24:38

The first disciples were people who witnessed the risen Christ in the flesh. It was only when they gave themselves completely to Christ that their doubts and fears were released. To be the stewards that Jesus desires, we too must give ourselves completely to Him.

**Fourth Sunday of Easter**

“I am the good shepherd. A good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. A hired man….sees a wolf coming and leaves the sheep and runs away….This is because he works for pay and has no concern for the sheep.” John 10:11-13

Unlike the hired hand, the good steward feels personal responsibility for the owner's property. The image of the good shepherd teaches us that stewardship is not about money, but about responsibility and commitment.

**Fifth Sunday of Easter**

“I am the vine, you are the branches. Whoever remains in me and I in him will bear much fruit, because without me you can do nothing.” John 15:5

We cannot produce abundantly without a deep prayer life, without living in God. A woman with a full time job and four children was once asked how she possibly had time to pray. She replied: “I am too busy not too pray! If I didn’t take time to be with God, I would be swallowed up in chaos.”

**Sixth Sunday of Easter**

“I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and your joy may be complete. This is my commandment: love one another as I love you. No one has greater love than this, to lay down one’s life for one’s friends.” John 15:11-13

The good steward rejoices, loves, and is a friend of Jesus. Stewardship flows out of our love and friendship with the Son of God.

**Seventh Sunday of Easter**

**Pentecost Sunday**

“There are different kinds of spiritual gifts but the same Spirit; there are different forms of service but the same Lord; there are different workings but the same God who produces all of them in everyone.” 1 Corinthians 12:4-6

We need to pay special attention to the gifts we are given. God called fisherman to be apostles and great preachers. We never know what gifts God will call us to use. The talents we are called to share may be the ones of which we are least aware.

**First Sunday after Pentecost**

**Trinity Sunday**

“Teach them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, until the end of the age.” Matthew 28:20

God is always with us, but how often are we with God? Our relationship with God is like our relationship with our children. What our children really want from us is our time. The same is true of God. In our stewardship of time, how much time do we set aside for God in prayer?

**Body & Blood of Christ**

“While they were eating, he took bread, said the blessing, broke it, and gave it to them, and said, “Take it; this is my body.” Then he took a cup, gave thanks, and gave it to them, and they all drank from it. He said to them, “This is my blood of the covenant, which will be shed for many.”” Mark 14:22-24

The Eucharist illustrates the ultimate model of stewardship – the sharing of God’s very self with all who seek Him.

**Baptism of our Lord**

**1st Sunday of Ordinary Time**

“Then Peter proceeded to speak and said, “In truth, I see that God shows no partiality.””

Acts 10:34

God, in His infinite love, does not play favorites among His children. Do we follow His example of impartiality, or do we judge how ‘deserving’ others are of our generosity based on the standards we set?

**Second Sunday**

“When Samuel went to sleep in his place, the LORD came and stood there, calling out as before: Samuel, Samuel! Samuel answered, “Speak, for your servant is listening.”” 1 Samuel 3:9-10

Today we hear Samuel respond eagerly, "Here I am" each time the Lord calls him. A steward must be listening for the call of God in one’s life and be ready to respond like Samuel, “Speak, for your servant is listening.”

**Third Sunday**

“Jesus said to them, “Come after me, and I will make you fishers of men.” Then they abandoned their nets and followed him.” Mark 1:17-18

If we truly recognize that all the things we have in life are gifts from God, would we be able to heed Christ’s call to give it all up and follow Him?

**Fourth Sunday**

# “The people were astonished at his teaching, for he taught them as one having authority and not as the scribes.” Mark 1:22

Listening to the authority of Jesus' teachings helps us not be confused by the perceived 'wisdom' of the world. The world focuses only on self, while the authority of Jesus teaches a steward is to think of others rather than oneself.

**Fifth Sunday**

“If I do so willingly, I have a recompense, but if unwillingly, then I have been entrusted with a stewardship.” 1 Corinthians 9:17

Doing good works that are enjoyable, or that come natural, can be a pleasure. When faced with good works that are not simple, or that challenge us, do we serve as the hands of Jesus or do our hands stay tucked in comfortable pockets?

**Sixth Sunday**

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**Seventh Sunday**

**Eighth Sunday**

**Ninth Sunday**

**Tenth Sunday**

**11th Sunday**

“He said, “To what shall we compare the kingdom of God….? It is like a mustard seed that, when it is sown in the ground, is the smallest of all the seeds on the earth. But once it is sown, it springs up and becomes the largest of plants and puts forth large branches, so that the birds of the sky can dwell in its shade.”” Mark 4:30-32

Stewardship teaches us that no matter how insignificant we may seem to ourselves, we can produce great things when we use the gifts that God has given us.

**12th Sunday**

“So whoever is in Christ is a new creation: the old things have passed away; behold, new things have come.” 2 Corinthians 5:17

Just as Christ was renewed through His death and resurrection, we are called to let go of what keeps us from Christ so that we may be reborn into new life with him. The good steward inspires a spirit of renewal in others.

**13th Sunday**

“….according to what one has, not according to what one does not have; not that others should have relief while you are burdened, but that as a matter of equality your surplus at the present time should supply their needs, so that their surplus may also supply your needs....”

2 Corinthians 8:12-14

Stewardship is about seeking a balance in one’s life. Stewardship recognizes that we are to share our blessings in a loving and just way in proportion to the manner in which we have been blessed.

**14th Sunday**

“So he was not able to perform any mighty deed there, apart from curing a few sick people by laying his hands on them. He was amazed at their lack of faith.“ Mark 6:5-6

Stewardship is a faith response. Christ could not perform good works without faith. Neither can we. If faith without works is dead, so are works without faith.

**15th Sunday**

“In him we have redemption by his blood, the forgiveness of transgressions, in accord with the riches of his grace.” Ephesians 1:7

God has been generous to each of us. Does God's generosity elicit in us a grateful response by the way we share our time, talent, and treasure?

**16th Sunday**

“The apostles gathered together with Jesus and reported all they had done and taught. He said to them, “Come away by yourselves to a deserted place and rest a while.” People were coming and going in great numbers, and they had no opportunity even to eat.” Mark 6:30-31

Stewardship does not mean you should pack your life full of more and more activities until there is no time left. Christ tells us to take a break once in awhile. Part of stewardship of time is time to rest.

**17th Sunday**

“Then Jesus took the loaves, gave thanks, and distributed them to those who were reclining, and also as much of the fish as they wanted.” John 6:11

The multiplication of the loaves and fishes teaches a basic principle of stewardship. That is that generosity travels in an ever-widening circle, returning a hundredfold to those who give from their substance.

**18th Sunday**

“And put on the new self, created in God’s way in righteousness and holiness of truth.” Ephesians 4:24

The distinction of being a beloved son or daughter comes from imitating Christ. When we are baptized, we put on a new self. This is a self that is lived in imitation of Christ.

**19th Sunday**

“So be imitators of God, as beloved children, and live in love, as Christ loved us and handed himself over for us as a sacrificial offering to God for a fragrant aroma.” Ephesians 5:1-2

Maturity is the ability to do the things that should be done, whether you like it or not. Recognizing our responsibility to share selflessly is a mature sense of stewardship.

**20th Sunday**

*“Watch carefully then how you live, not as foolish persons but as wise…” (Ephesians 5:15)*

A wise person recognizes that all we have comes from God. A wise person thanks God every day for all His many blessings. A wise person realizes that God has blessed us for a reason and He wants us to be partners with Him in His work here on earth.

**21st Sunday**

“But the people answered, “Far be it from us to forsake the LORD to serve other gods. For it was the LORD, our God, who brought us and our ancestors up out of the land of Egypt….Therefore we also will serve the LORD, for he is our God.” Joshua 24:16-18

What gods do we worship – greed, selfishness, comfort, appearances, consumerism, pleasure? A steward is thankful to the God of generosity and does not become trapped in worshiping other false gods.

**22nd Sunday**

“All good giving and every perfect gift is from above….[God] willed to give us birth by the word of truth that we may be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures.” James 1:17-18

Every gift we have comes from God. In recognition of this fact, we are invited to return the first fruits of our time, talent, and treasure to God.

**23rd Sunday**

“My brothers, show no partiality as you adhere to the faith in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ.” James 2:1

We should show no favoritism to those we serve or in how we serve. All of our talents are equally important, no matter how humble. Our small acts of kindness to others make more of a difference than our grandiose efforts.

**24th Sunday**

“What good is it, my brothers, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can that faith save him?” James 2:14

Saint James poses this bold question because he believes this basic tenant of Christian stewardship – all are called to share their gifts in love and justice with others to build up God’s kingdom.

**25th Sunday**

“You covet but do not possess. You kill and envy but you cannot obtain; you fight and wage war. You do not possess because you do not ask. You ask but do not receive, because you ask wrongly, to spend it on your passions.” James 4:2-3

Saint James warns us against the dangers of materialism. In fighting the materialism in our culture, I must ask myself not only, “What do I own?” but more importantly, “What owns me?” What is the one thing I possess that I could not live without? This is what owns me.

**26th Sunday**

“For whoever is not against us is for us.” Mark 9:40

The practice of stewardship should not provoke quarrels and factions. There are many different ways a person or a parish can practice stewardship. Anyone who is trying to practice stewardship is part of a common journey in faith.

**27th Sunday**

“The LORD God said: It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suited to him.” Genesis 2:18

The U.S. Bishops' pastoral letter on stewardship calls us to a life of community in order to fight the destructive individualism in our culture. It is not good to be alone.

**28th Sunday**

“Jesus, looking at him, loved him and said to him, “You are lacking in one thing. Go, sell what you have, and give to [the] poor and you will have treasure in heaven; then come, follow me.”” Mark 10:21

Following Christ in a consumer society like ours is not an easy task. As a result, we are trained not to give anything, but to always pay for what we get; and to expect everyone else to do the same.

**29th Sunday**

“Jesus summoned them and said to them, “You know that those who are recognized as rulers over the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones make their authority over them felt. But it shall not be so among you. Rather, whoever wishes to be great among you will be your servant; whoever wishes to be first among you will be the slave of all.”” Mark 10:42-44

Stewardship is an expression of our practical faith. It is not just about how we spend our money, but about how we spend our lives. We are called to spend our lives in service to others.

**30th Sunday**

“Jesus said to him in reply, “What do you want me to do for you?” The blind man replied to him, “Master, I want to see.” Jesus told him, “Go your way; your faith has saved you.” Immediately he received his sight and followed him on the way.” Mark 10:51-52

The healing and gifts we share with others are based on the healing and gifts we have first received from God. Our generosity is a response to God's generosity.

**31st Sunday**

“You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength.” Mark 12:30

True stewardship is other-directed. The question a steward always tries to answer is: “What is the best way I can show my love for this neighbor?”

**32nd Sunday**

“….Amen, I say to you, this poor widow put in more than all the other contributors to the treasury. For they have all contributed from their surplus wealth, but she, from her poverty, has contributed all she had, her whole livelihood.” Mark 12:43-44

What made the widow give from her need? Maybe her state in life made her realize that relying on God is the way she had survived in the past. What in our lives keeps us from this same act of faith?

**33rd Sunday**

“Every priest stands daily at his ministry, offering frequently those same sacrifices that can never take away sins….Where there is forgiveness of these, there is no longer offering for sin.” Hebrews 10:11,18

Stewardship is not about guilt, but rather gratitude and service. The motto for stewardship is not, “give until it hurts,” but “give until it feels good.”

**RELIGIOUS FEAST DAYS**

**Christ the King**

“…. Everyone who belongs to the truth listens to my voice.” John 18:37

Stewardship is not an ideal but a lived faith. In order to carry out the Master's wishes (action), the good steward must first know the Master's mind (prayer) and listen to the Master's voice. Stewardship has often been defined as “prayer elevated to a lifestyle.”

**Cycle C**

**ADVENT**

**First Sunday of Advent**

***“May the Lord make you increase and abound in love for one another and for all, just as we have for you.” I Thessalonians 3:12***

Love is contagious. Joy, gratitude, generosity, and service flow from love. So it is with stewardship. The U.S. Bishops teach us: “Christian stewards receive God's gifts gratefully, cultivate them responsibly, and share them lovingly with others.…”

**Second Sunday of Advent**

***“And this is my prayer, that your love may increase ever more and more in knowledge and every kind of perception, to discern what is of value….” Philippians 1:9-10***

When we take seriously the role of steward, our vision becomes outward-directed with a longing to share from our blessings and abundance with those in need.

**Third Sunday of Advent**

***“The crowds asked John the Baptist, ‘What should we do?’ He said to them in reply, ‘Whoever has two cloaks should share with the person who has none. And whoever has food should do likewise.’” Luke 3:10-11***

The answer to the question, “what should we do?” is simple – SHARE. Sharing from the abundances we are given from God is the bottom line for all good stewards.

**Fourth Sunday of Advent**

***“First he says, ‘Sacrifices and offerings, holocausts and sin offerings, you neither desired nor delighted in.’ ….He takes away the first (covenant) to establish the second.” Hebrews 10:8-9***

The first covenant emphasized giving as a duty or obligation under the law. The new covenant emphasizes thanksgiving, gratitude, and cheerfulness – the qualities of a Christian steward.

**CHRISTMAS TIME**

**Christmas**

***“What came to be through him was life, and this life was the light of the human race; the light that shines in darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.” John 1:4-5***

Jesus is the light of the world. We too can be the light of Christ simply by sharing a smile, a compliment, or encouragement to those who are hurting or feel neglected during this Christmas season.

**Holy Family**

***“….Did you not know that I must be in my Father’s house?” Luke 2:49***

Even at a young age, Jesus understood that he was to be a steward of his Father’s will. Christian stewards seek to live their lives in God’s will.

**New Year’s Day**

***“Then the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, just as it had been told to them.” Luke 2:20***

At the time of Jesus’ birth, shepherds were among the lowliest of professions, yet they were the heralds chosen by God to proclaim the birth of Mary’s child throughout the land. No matter our circumstances, we too are called by God to share the good news of Jesus with those we encounter.

**Epiphany**

***“….They prostrated themselves and did him homage. Then they opened their treasures and offered him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh.” Matthew 2:11***

The wise men spent their lives seeking God and when they finally found Him they opened their coffers in generosity. Stewardship is much easier when we seek God first in our lives.

**Baptism of our Lord**

***“After all the people had been baptized and Jesus also had been baptized and was praying, heaven was opened and the Holy Spirit descended upon him in bodily form like a dove.” Luke 3:21***

Our stewardship journey begins in the waters of baptism. It is through the waters of baptism that we are given a new life and become disciples of Jesus. As Jesus’ disciples, we are called to build the kingdom of God with the gifts God has given us.

**LENT**

**First Sunday of Lent**

***“Therefore, I have now brought you the first fruits of the products of the soil which you, O LORD, have given me.’ And having set them before the Lord, your God, you shall bow down in his presence.” Deuteronomy 26:10***

Agriculture was vital to the Israelites. When they shared the first fruits of their harvest they were showing their gratitude to God for His many blessings. We also show our gratitude for our blessings by making a weekly sacrificial gift — the first fruits of our labor — to the Lord.

**Second Sunday of Lent**

***“Join with others in being imitators of me, brothers and sisters and observe those who thus conduct themselves according to the model you have in us.” Philippians 3:17***

Imitation is a great teacher. Our children best learn the value and practice of good stewardship when we walk with them and demonstrate by our actions that living the life of a steward is a joyful possibility.

**Third Sunday of Lent**

***“And he told them this parable: There once was a person who had a fig tree planted in his orchard, and when he came in search of fruit on it but found none, he said to the gardener….‘cut it down.’ He said to him in reply ‘Sir, leave it for this year also, and I shall cultivate the ground around it and fertilize it; it may bear fruit in the future. If not, you can cut it down.’” Luke 13:6-9***

As the gardener cultivated the fig tree, stewards are also called to cultivate the talents of one another. The truth is that talents not used are lost to us and others.

**Fourth Sunday of Lent**

***“He said to his father in reply: ‘Look, all these years I served you.....yet you never gave me even a young goat to feast on with my friends. But when your son returns who swallowed up your property with prostitutes, for him you slaughter the fattened calf.’” Luke 15:29-30***

The father practiced God’s version of generosity – unearned and unconditional. A steward sees a need and responds without asking questions concerning whether it is deserved or not.

**Fifth Sunday of Lent**

***“I consider everything as a loss because of the supreme good of knowing Christ Jesus is my Lord. For his sake I have accepted the loss of all things and I consider them so much rubbish, that I may gain Christ.” Philippians 3:8***

St. Paul’s knowledge of Christ redefined the true meaning of wealth. Like St. Paul, a Christian steward understands Christ is the most valuable gift of all.

**EASTER TIME**

**Easter Sunday**

***“Do you not know that a little yeast leavens all the dough? Clear out the old yeast, so that you may become a fresh batch of dough….” I Corinthians 5:6-7***

Stewards can never calculate the effect our service may have on others. The work of redemption is sown in secret, but harvested for the benefit of all. Stewards simply trust that their efforts in Christ’s name make a difference.

**Second Sunday of Easter**

***“Jesus said to him, ‘Have you come to believe because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and have believed.” John 20:29***

It has been said that “seeing is believing.” A steward’s actions are guided by faith and those actions serve as a model for others who need to see to believe.

**Third Sunday of Easter**

***“Simon, son of John, do you love me more than these? ….Follow me.” John 21:16,19***

Jesus instructed Peter to lead the Church, and Jesus also told Peter about the high price he would have to pay. Good stewards recognize that to follow Jesus is a difficult journey requiring great sacrifice. They also know that Jesus will be with them through their joys and sorrows along the way.

**Fourth Sunday of Easter**

***“Jesus said, ‘My sheep hear my voice; I know them, and they follow me.’” John 10:27***

Always pray first. To follow the Shepherd we must first hear His voice through prayer. It is only after we pray that we can know the proper way to live as God’s stewards.

**Fifth Sunday of Easter**

***“It is the decision of the Holy Spirit and of us not to place on you any burden beyond these necessities.” Acts 15:28***

Jewish tradition was filled with ritual observances. Christian stewardship is not a call to a burdensome life of rules. It is a call to a life of freedom through the joyful sharing of one’s gifts from God.

**Sixth Sunday of Easter**

*“…do not let your hearts be troubled or afraid.” John 14:27*

Our limited human understanding cannot begin to understand the immense power of God. Instead of trusting in God, we think we can control every outcome. Do you want to make God laugh? Tell Him your plans. The next time worry, anxiety or fear creeps in, thank God for all He has given you and trust He has a better plan for you.

**Seventh Sunday of Easter**

*“I am the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end.” Revelations 22:13*

This is a reminder of how we should live our lives 24 hours a day, 7 days a week – putting God first in all that we do. Not only when I am at Mass and parish activities, but when I am in the world, at work or at school. Living gratefully and generously is a lifestyle, it’s how I make all my decisions.

**Pentecost Sunday**

***“And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in different tongues, as the Spirit enabled them to proclaim.” Acts 2:4***

At that first Pentecost, the Church was born as the Spirit filled the Apostles with the gift to proclaim the good news in numerous languages. All those who were present heard the good news proclaimed in their native tongue. Stewards use the gifts received through Confirmation to build up the parish community just as the disciples used their gifts to start the community of believers.

**Trinity Sunday**

***“And hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit that has been given to us.” Romans 5:5***

We are children of a generous God; we are stewards of all God’s gifts. Let us be grateful for the gifts God has given to us.

**Body & Blood of Christ**

***“They all ate and were satisfied. And when the leftover fragments were picked up, they filled twelve wicker baskets.’” Luke 9:17***

The disciples wanted to send the people out to find their own provisions, but Jesus had a different plan. The miracle of the loaves and fishes reminds us that when we share our gifts in His name there will always be more than enough.

**ORDINARY TIME**

**First Sunday**

**Baptism of Our Lord**

***“After all the people had been baptized and Jesus also had been baptized and was praying, heaven was opened and the Holy Spirit descended upon him in bodily form like a dove.” Luke 3:21***

Our stewardship journey begins in the waters of baptism. It is through the waters of baptism that we are given a new life and become disciples of Jesus. As Jesus’ disciples, we are called to build the kingdom of God with the gifts God has given us.

**Second Sunday**

***“There are different kinds of spiritual gifts but the same Spirit; there are different forms of service but the same Lord; there are different workings but the same God who produces all of them in everyone.” I Corinthians 12:4-6***

A thankful steward knows that all he or she possesses is the result of God’s grace. What we make of our lives depends on our work, but the talents we possess are gifts from God.

**Third Sunday**

***“But as it is, God placed the parts, each one of them, in the body as he intended. ....Indeed, the parts of the body that seem to be weaker are all the more necessary….” 1 Corinthians 12:18, 22***

We are all part of God’s family and have something to contribute. Weaker members of the family may bless us with the opportunity to be good stewards by helping them as Christ would help.

**Fourth Sunday**

***“Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, before you were born I dedicated you, a prophet to the nations I appointed you.” Jeremiah 1:5***

We are all called to make a difference in the world. Our vocations are uniquely ours based on the gifts that God has given us. St. Augustine said, “God loves each of us as if there were only one of us.”

**Fifth Sunday Mark**

***“….Jesus said to Simon, ‘Do not be afraid; from now on you will be catching men.’ When they brought their boats to shore, they left everything and followed him.” Luke 5:10-11***

Stewards are, first and foremost, disciples of Jesus. A life of stewardship has two components. First, we are called to follow Christ. Second, we are called to spread the good news of the Gospel.

**Sixth Sunday**

***“Blessed is the one who trusts in the Lord, whose hope is the Lord.” Jeremiah 17:7***

God’s will for our lives is for us to be blessed. Blessed means to be happy, content and at peace. Our faithful trust in Him gives us the courage to venture out boldly to live the kind of life He has called us to live - lives filled with His blessings and a willingness to share those blessings with others.

**Seventh Sunday**

***“Give, and gifts will be given to you; a good measure, packed together, shaken down, and overflowing, will be poured into your lap. For the measure with which you measure will in return be measured out to you.” Luke 6:38***

When we give generously of the resources God has entrusted to us, we always receive more than we give.

**Eighth Sunday**

***“A good tree does not bear rotten fruit, nor does a rotten tree bear good fruit.” Luke 6:43***

It is good to give thanks and praise God for His blessings, for His kindness, and for His faithfulness. Living a life of gratitude and generosity produces abundant and good fruit.

**Ninth Sunday**

**Tenth Sunday**

*“And when the Lord saw her, he had compassion on her and said to her, ‘Do not weep.’” Luke 7:13*

This verse is a great reminder that the Stewardship lifestyle is one of service, putting God first and to “love one another.” Unfortunately today, many people have “passion” for activities they enjoy - their job and off-work activities. Many times our “passion” to excel is at the expense of someone else. Maybe we need to focus on a little less passion for our individual concerns and a lot more compassion for others.

**11th Sunday**

*“When I entered your house, you did not give me water for my feet…” Luke 7:44*

Today’s Gospel calls us to consider how we serve God. Do we consume like the Pharisee who simply reclines at the table and expects to be served? Or, do we contribute like the woman who kneels before Jesus and washes His feet? Every day we must make a choice. Take or give? Consume or contribute? Recline or serve?

**12th Sunday**

*“If anyone wishes to come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me.****”*** *Luke 9:23*

We are not very good at “denying ourselves” in our society. Our current economic situation is evidence of what happens when people think they can have everything they want. Jesus calls us to set our own personal “wants” aside so that we have the resources to follow Him instead.

**13th Sunday**

***“To him Jesus said, ‘No one who sets a hand to the plow and looks to what was left behind is fit for the Kingdom of God.” Luke 9:62***

We are called to share our first fruits, not our leftovers. Stewardship entails total commitment, not a nervous looking over our shoulders to see if we can afford this commitment.

**14th Sunday**

***“The harvest is abundant but the laborers are few; so ask the master of the harvest to send out laborers for his harvest.” Luke 10:2***

The work Christ entrusted to his first disciples is also entrusted to us by virtue of our baptism. Stewardship is an invitation from God. It is an invitation to join in the work of the Church.

**15th Sunday**

***“But because he wished to justify himself, he said to Jesus, ‘And who is my neighbor?’”***

***Luke 10:29***

Jesus answers this question by telling the story of the Good Samaritan. His answer was, “the one who treated him with mercy.” A steward makes every effort to feel what one in need is feeling and then acts accordingly. Like the Good Samaritan, a steward must act on his compassion.

**16th Sunday**

***“Martha, burdened with much serving , came to him and said, ‘….tell her to help me.’ The Lord said to her in reply: ‘Martha, Martha, you are anxious and worried about many things. There is need of only one thing. Mary has chosen the better part and it will not be taken from her.’” Luke 10:40-42***

Few stories in Scripture better portray the fact that stewardship is an attitude, not an activity. Martha was busy, but Mary had the right attitude. Prayer and time spent with Christ are essential.

**17th Sunday**

***“Jesus was praying in a certain place, and when he had finished, one of his disciples said to him, ‘Lord, teach us to pray just as John taught his disciples.’” Luke 11:1***

Scripture tells us Jesus prayed before every major action in His life. We should strive to follow Jesus’ example by always praying first. In that way, we can ensure we are doing God’s work and not our own.

**18th Sunday**

***“Then he said to the crowd, ‘Take care to guard against all greed, for though one may be rich, one’s life does not consist of possessions.’” Luke 12:15***

In the realm of faith, material possessions are a false security. They often lead to a path that ends up placing money as our first priority, while God, family, and church fall somewhere behind. The only real security in life is to place our trust in God.

**19th Sunday**

***“Jesus said to his disciples: ‘….Sell your belongings and give alms. ....an inexhaustible treasure in heaven that no thief can reach nor moth destroy. For where your treasure is, there also your heart will be.’” Luke 12:33-34***

A good way to examine “where our heart is,” is to spend time reviewing our appointment calendar and our checkbook. Where am I spending my time and money? A thoughtful examination will reveal where our heart really is.

**20th Sunday**

***“….while keeping our eyes fixed on Jesus, the leader and perfecter of faith. For the sake of the joy that lay before him, he endured the cross, despising its shame, and has taken his seat at the right of the throne of God.” Hebrews 12:2***

Setting PRIORITIES is the key to balancing everyday demands made on us with the limited amounts of time, talent, and treasure we possess. When we accept Jesus as our priority, we do not squander our gifts.

**21st Sunday**

***“For behold, some are last who will be first, and some are first who will be last.” Luke 13:30***

There is no guarantee that we'll get credit for our hard work. A steward’s job is to sow the seeds, not to worry about who harvests the crop.

**22nd Sunday**

***“Rather, when you hold a banquet, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind; blessed indeed will you be because of their inability to repay you. For you will be repaid at the resurrection of the righteous.” Luke 14:13-14***

Our gifts were not given to be bargaining chips in which we expect repayment (e.g. tax breaks, return invitations, or recognition). Preoccupation with repayment is not stewardship, but a search for reward.

**23rd Sunday**

***“So then, none of you can be my disciple who does not give up all his own possessions.” Luke 14:33***

All that we have is actually God’s. The renunciation is realizing we are only caretakers of what we have and not owners.

**24th Sunday**

***“They have quickly turned aside from the way which I commanded them. They have made for themselves a molten calf, and have worshiped it….” Exodus 32:8***

The days of worshiping idols are not as far away as we might think. Today’s idols are houses, cars, clothes, technology, power, and wealth.

**25th Sunday**

***“And his master praised the unrighteous manager because he had acted shrewdly; for the sons of his age are more shrewd in relation to their own kind than the sons of light.” Luke 16:8***

The parable of the unjust steward is not about thievery, but about initiative. If Jesus’ disciples would be only half as clever at promoting the Kingdom as the unjust manager was at promoting his own self interest, the Kingdom would flourish.

**26th Sunday**

***“[Abraham] said to [the rich man], ‘If they do not listen to Moses and the prophets, they will not be persuaded even if someone rises from the dead.’” Luke 16:31***

The dead rich man was afraid that his five brothers would not learn the lesson he had learned. Abraham replies that not even miracles will soften the heart of someone blinded by selfishness. The focus of stewards is always on Christ.

**27th Sunday**

***“So you too, when you do all the things which are commanded you, say, ‘We are unworthy slaves; we have done only that which we ought to have done.’” Luke 17:10***

The message is clear. A steward is concerned about making a difference, not about having other people know that he or she is making a difference.

**28th Sunday**

***“And [Jesus] said to him, ‘Stand up and go; your faith has made you well.’” Luke 17:19***

Just like the Samaritan leper, a Christian steward receives God’s gifts gratefully. We must not get so busy that we forget to thank God for all the blessings in our lives.

**29th Sunday**

***“I tell you that he will bring about justice for them quickly. However, when the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on the earth?” Luke 18:8***

Where would Jesus find faith in today’s world? Faith is present wherever there are acts of good stewards.

**30th Sunday**

***“I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith; in the future there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness….and not only to me, but also to all who have loved his appearing.” 2 Timothy 4:7-8***

This message from St. Paul assures us that those who endure hardships and sacrifices, yet devote their lives to the service of God and others, will receive the crown of heaven. Stewards always place their trust in God.

**31st Sunday**

***“When Jesus came to the place, he looked up and said to him, ‘Zacchaeus, hurry and come down, for today I must stay at your house.’” Luke 19:5***

Jesus saw goodness in Zacchaeus’ heart and called him to be in His presence. Jesus has called all of us into His presence and awaits our thankful responses.

**32nd Sunday**

***“Now he is not the God of the dead but of the living; for all live to him.” Luke 20:38***

A wise grandmother once told her grandchildren before she died, “Don't worry about flowers for me once I'm gone. Give your flowers to the living.” Her instruction is the very definition of stewardship – giving your flowers to the living.

**33rd Sunday**

***“And while some were talking about the temple, that it was adorned with beautiful stones and votive gifts, [Jesus] said, ‘As for these things you are looking at, the days will come in which there will not be one stone upon another which will not be torn down.’” Luke 21:5-6***

Our material world, as wonderful and beautiful as it is, will one day cease to exist. It is a sobering thought, but one that helps us detach from our reliance on things and instead places our reliance on God.