

ARCHDIOCESE OF LOUISVILLE
STEWARDSHIP BULLETIN REFLECTIONS
CYCLE C – 2018-19 (USCCB Lectionary and New American Bible)

*Based on reflections prepared by Reverend Thomas Gentile and
the Office of Mission Advancement*

First Sunday of Advent (December 2, 2018)

“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, share them lovingly in justice with others....”

Second Sunday of Advent (December 9, 2018)

“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 (December 16, 2018)

“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 and is especially meaningful in this Holy Year of Mercy.

Fourth Sunday of Advent (December 23, 2018)

“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.

The Nativity of the Lord [Christmas] (December 25, 2018)

“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.

The Holy Family of Jesus, Mary and Joseph (December 30, 2018)

“...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.

Solemnity of Mary, the Holy Mother of God (January 1, 2019)

“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.

The Epiphany of the Lord (January 6, 2019)

“....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.

The Baptism of the Lord (January 13, 2019)

“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 in Ordinary Time (January 20, 2019)

"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

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 in Ordinary Time (January 27, 2019)

"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 in Ordinary Time (February 3, 2019)

"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 in Ordinary Time (February 10, 2019)

"....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 in Ordinary Time (February 17, 2019)

“Blessed are those who trust in the Lord; the Lord will be their trust.” Jeremiah 17:7

We know that we are called to serve our brothers and sisters in Christ. If we trust in the Lord, how can we not be good stewards of all that has been entrusted to us in this life? St. Francis of Assisi instructed that, “For it is in giving, that we receive” which includes receiving abundant blessings from our Heavenly Father.

Seventh Sunday in Ordinary Time (February 24, 2019)

“To the person who strikes you on one cheek, offer the other one as well, and from the person who takes your cloak, do not withhold even your tunic.” Luke 6:29

A mature understanding of stewardship is not about “what one gets in return for their generosity.” Rather, it is about selflessly sharing one’s blessings from God, with no expectation of personal gain.

Eighth Sunday in Ordinary Time (March 3, 2019)

“Therefore, my beloved brothers, be firm, steadfast, always fully devoted to the work of the Lord, knowing that in the Lord your labor is not in vain.” 1 Corinthians 15:58

Where we focus our labor, our efforts, is often a reflection of our priorities. Is the focus rooted in serving the Lord, or will that labor indeed be in vain when one day the Lord asks how we shared the blessings placed in our lives.

First Sunday of Lent (March 10, 2019)

“Therefore, I have now brought you the first fruits of the products of the soil which you, O Lord, have given me.” Deuteronomy 26:10

The origins of the theology of stewardship are found in this passage from the Old Testament. Stewards return the first fruits of their labors to God, not the leftovers. This practice is a reminder to always place God first in our lives.

Second Sunday of Lent (March 17, 2019)

“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 (March 24, 2019)

“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 (March 31, 2019)

“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 (April 7, 2019)

“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. A steward, like St. Paul, understands Christ is the most valuable gift of all.

Palm Sunday of the Passion of the Lord (April 14, 2019)

“Christ Jesus, though he was in the form of God, did not regard equality with God something to be grasped. Rather, he emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, coming in human likeness.” Philippians 2:6-7

Stewardship is an attitude. It is an attitude that does not seek praise from others, but an attitude that strives to serve others. Everyday a steward asks, “Who does God want me to serve today?”

Easter Sunday (April 21, 2019)

“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....” 1 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 – Divine Mercy Sunday (April 28, 2019)

“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 how it is done.

Third Sunday of Easter (May 5, 2019)

“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 tells 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 (May 12, 2019)

“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 know the proper way to live as God's stewards.

Fifth Sunday of Easter (May 19, 2019)

“This is how all will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.” John 13:35

A Christian steward is a person who loves both God and neighbor. A steward shares his or her gifts from God in justice and love of others.

Sixth Sunday of Easter (May 26, 2019)

“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.

Seventh Sunday of Easter (June 2, 2019)

"Lifting up his eyes to heaven, Jesus prayed saying: 'Holy Father, I pray not only for them, but also for those who will believe in me through their word, so that they may all be one....'" John 17:20-21

It is through the stewardship of sharing our blessings with others, and caring for their needs, that we truly become one Body of Christ. Let us always pray to God our Father that we recognize these opportunities as they arise.

Pentecost Sunday (June 9, 2019)

"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 is born as the Spirit fills the apostles with the gift to proclaim the good news in the numerous languages. And 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.

The Most Holy Trinity (June 16, 2019)

"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.

The Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ [Corpus Christi] (June 23, 2019)

"Then taking the five loaves and the two fish, and looking up to heaven, he said the blessing over them, broke them, and gave them to the disciples to set before the crowd. They all ate and were satisfied." Luke 9:16-17

Our individual gifts may sometimes seem humble, but when raised to God and blessed by God they will be multiplied in ways we cannot foresee or imagine.

Thirteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time (June 30, 2019)

“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.

Fourteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time (July 7, 2019)

“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.

Fifteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time (July 14, 2019)

“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.

Sixteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time (July 21, 2019)

“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.

Seventeenth Sunday in Ordinary Time (July 28, 2019)

“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

Scriptures tell 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.

Eighteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time (August 4, 2019)

"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.

Nineteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time (August 11, 2019)

"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.

Twentieth Sunday in Ordinary Time (August 18, 2019)

"....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.

Twenty-First Sunday in Ordinary Time (August 25, 2019)

"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.

Twenty-Second Sunday in Ordinary Time (September 1, 2019)

“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.

Twenty-Third Sunday in Ordinary Time (September 8, 2019)

“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 and not owners.

Twenty-Fourth Sunday in Ordinary Time (September 15, 2019)

“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.

Twenty-Fifth Sunday in Ordinary Time (September 22, 2019)

“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.

Twenty-Sixth Sunday in Ordinary Time (September 29, 2019)

“[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.

Twenty-Seventh Sunday in Ordinary Time (October 6, 2019)

“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.

Twenty-Eighth Sunday in Ordinary Time (October 13, 2019)

“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.

Twenty-Ninth Sunday in Ordinary Time (October 20, 2019)

“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.

Thirtieth Sunday in Ordinary Time (October 27, 2019)

“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 Tim 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 be taken care of. Stewards always place their trust in God.

Thirty-First Sunday in Ordinary Time (November 3, 2019)

“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.

Thirty-Second Sunday in Ordinary Time (November 10, 2019)

“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.

Thirty-Third Sunday in Ordinary Time (November 17, 2019)

“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.

Our Lord Jesus Christ, King of the Universe (November 24, 2019)

“And he was saying, ‘Jesus, remember me when you come in your Kingdom!’” Luke 23:42

Jesus will never forget us. As this Church year comes to its liturgical end, let us continue as Christian stewards to follow Christ, our Lord and King, as we travel together along the disciple's journey.