



STEWARDSHIP THOUGHTS FOR PARISH BULLETINS

Cycle A (Matthew) | 2010-2011



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CYCLE A (MATTHEW)

First Sunday in Advent

Even as we anticipate the coming of our Savior on Christmas, the Scripture passages remind us to always be prepared, since we cannot know the day the Lord will come for us. St. Paul especially encourages us to put on the Lord, Jesus Christ, and avoid temptations of the flesh. For on that day, we will be called to account for our stewardship of God's abundant blessings to us.

Second Sunday of Advent

In his Letter to the Romans, St. Paul asks us to be faithful stewards of God's gifts through two powerful messages: *"Welcome one another; then, as Christ accepted you, for the glory of God."* Remember, a stewardship parish is a welcoming parish, to parishioners and guests alike. Also, Christian stewards understand that everything that we are and have is a gift from God, and given to us so we may serve Him in our life's vocation.

Third Sunday of Advent

The Scripture passages vividly proclaim the joy and healing we, and the entire world, will experience with the coming of our Savior, Jesus Christ. St. Matthew especially relates the wondrous deeds of Jesus' earthly ministry — the blind see, the crippled walk, lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised to life, and the poor hear the Good News. As Christian stewards, we are challenged to carry on Christ's ministry through the Church.

Fourth Sunday of Advent

The Liturgy of the Word features two familiar figures in Scripture: King David and the Virgin Mary. The Lord reminds David how He has always cared for him, and will continue to do so. Mary gives us the model of a faithful steward when the angel Gabriel tells her she is to be the mother of our Savior: *"Let it be done to me as you say."* These powerful messages teach us to put our complete trust in God as we strive to serve Him as Christ's disciples.

Christmas

From the earliest days of our youth, we are familiar with the Christmas story: Mary and Joseph journey to Bethlehem for the Roman census; there, Jesus is born in a stable; angels sing *"Glory to God in the highest,"* proclaiming Christ's birth to shepherds in the field, who then hasten to the stable to adore the new-born King. Perhaps not as familiar is the prophet Isaiah's joyous prophecy that the Savior Who is to come will be the Light of the World to lead mankind out of darkness. Christ's light guides us on our stewardship journey as we respond in our efforts to be His disciples.

Feast of the Holy Family

The readings from the Book of Sirach and St. Paul's Letter to the Colossians express God's directives in applying Christian principles to family life. As good stewards, we know the



importance of making time to support, encourage, and show devotion to our loved ones. When these efforts are successful, a family thrives in its endeavors to follow our Lord, Jesus Christ.

The Epiphany of the Lord

A common theme emerges from the Scripture readings: Christ, through the Church, welcomes all people to the faith. Faith is not offered to only a few chosen ones. In a spirit of hospitality, do we welcome any and all who seek faith through our Eucharistic worship, our RCIA and faith formation programs, or other sources of God's abundant blessings?

The Baptism of the Lord

In St. Matthew's Gospel, John baptizes Jesus. This act of grace begins His public ministry of proclaiming the Good News and bringing salvation to the world. Our own baptism calls us to a closer relationship with Christ — to be His disciples. We carry out our discipleship through our stewardship response of sharing time, talent, and treasure with the Church and our community. As we grow in discipleship, stewardship becomes a way of life.

Second Sunday in Ordinary Time

In his First Letter to the Corinthians, St. Paul challenges his community to a higher standard of purity through Christ Jesus. We must remember that holiness is not reserved for the "saints" of old. God, through His Son Jesus, invites all to become saints, and to live lives of holiness. Do we, as good Christian stewards, embrace His call to holiness?

Third Sunday in Ordinary Time

In St. Matthew's Gospel, Isaiah's prophesy — "*The people who walk in darkness have seen a great light; upon those who dwelt in the land of gloom a light has shone*" — is fulfilled in Christ. The "land of gloom" refers to the areas where Israel's trail to Babylonian captivity began. In this same area, in the small fishing village of Capernaum, Jesus began His public ministry, calling Peter, Andrew, James, and John to be His disciples. As Christian stewards, we, too, are called to a deeper relationship with the Lord, and to use our God-given gifts to further His kingdom.

Fourth Sunday in Ordinary Time

In addition to following the Ten Commandments, adopting the Eight Beatitudes proclaimed in the Gospels is an excellent way for Catholic Christians to embrace stewardship. We can use the Beatitudes for an examination of conscience prior to participating in the Sacrament of Reconciliation. As we continue our journey as Christ's disciples, we need to make His Sermon on the Mount a base for our conversion of heart and mind in making stewardship a way of life.

Fifth Sunday in Ordinary Time

The Scripture passages from Isaiah, Psalm 112, and St. Matthew's Gospel describe those who generously share their blessings with the needy, show justice, and follow the Lord's commands as a "light" to others. If we, as Christian stewards, seek a deeper relationship with God through Christ Jesus, and live virtuous lives, we, too, may become "*the salt of the Earth.*" Glorifying God through the generous giving of our time, talent, and treasure becomes an example for others to follow.



Sixth Sunday in Ordinary Time

The readings from the Book of Sirach, Psalm 119, and St. Matthew's Gospel are linked by a common theme: Wholeheartedly following God's commands and directives leads to eternal salvation. In this world, we are surrounded daily by temptations that prey on our weaknesses. Yet, if we are to grow as disciples in Christ, we must resist the temptations that lead to sin. True freedom comes from following God's ways and not our own will and desires. In times of weakness, we find strength through His always present gift of grace.

Seventh Sunday in Ordinary Time

The readings from the Book of Leviticus and St. Matthew's Gospel tell us to love our neighbor. In the Gospel, Jesus says to turn the other cheek when one strikes you and to pray for those who persecute you. Even for faithful stewards, these commands may challenge our Christianity. When we are wronged, it is often difficult to dig deep to find love and forgiveness. Yet, if we do not learn to forgive from the heart, we will never find true peace in our lives.

Eighth Sunday in Ordinary Time

In St. Matthew's Gospel, Jesus teaches His disciples, "*No one can serve two masters ... You cannot serve God and mammon.*" "Mammon" refers to money, wealth, or property. Wealth itself is not bad; it is a gift to share in gratitude to further God's kingdom. Jesus teaches us to trust God to take care of all of our needs. Faithful stewards know happiness is not attained through status, power, or material possessions. Rather, joy and eternal happiness come through our discipleship with the Lord.

Ninth Sunday in Ordinary Time

Today's readings teach about following God's laws and commands. Moses tells the Israelites to worship God alone and to take His laws to heart. St. Paul informs the Roman Church that Gentiles who believe in Christ and follow His teachings can also belong to God. Jesus, in St. Matthew's Gospel, teaches that true disciples who seek God's will, listen to His Word, and act upon it in their daily lives, will enter the kingdom of heaven. They build their houses on rock, which withstands the moral challenges symbolized by wind, rain, and floods. As Christian stewards, do we build our faith on the rock of Christ?

First Sunday of Lent

The common theme in today's readings is avoiding the temptation to sin. The passage from the Book of Genesis tells the story of Adam and Eve's fall from grace. The psalmist sings of God's mercy and forgiveness. St. Paul alerts the Roman community to God's gift of grace, and to how this grace can overpower sin. St. Matthew's Gospel describes Jesus' 40 days in the desert, culminating in the temptations by the devil. We, as Christian stewards, live in a world surrounded by many temptations that can distract us from living out Christ's call to be His disciples. Yet, even when we fail, His mercy is always available through the Sacrament of Reconciliation.



Second Sunday of Lent

God called Abram (later Abraham) to a new land, and promised to bless him and make him a great nation. Without question or fear, Abraham faithfully followed God's will. In St. Matthew's Gospel, Christ's divinity is revealed through His Transfiguration on the mountaintop before Peter, James, and John. Jesus asked them not to reveal this vision until after His death and resurrection. They, too, faithfully followed His directive. On our way to embracing Christian stewardship as a way of life, do we strive to faithfully carry out God's will for us?

Third Sunday of Lent

The subject of water links the passages from the Book of Exodus and St. John's Gospel. The Israelites grumbled to Moses about bringing them into the desert to die of thirst. Moses prayed to the Lord and, miraculously, life-giving water flowed from the rock, symbolic in a sense of the Sacrament of Baptism. In the Gospel, Jesus discussed with the Samaritan woman the "living water" that He provides, but not the same water found in Jacob's well. His promise of eternal life is made to Jew and Gentile alike, to all faithful stewards who strive to be His disciples.

Fourth Sunday of Lent

Light is the common theme in St. Paul's Letter to the Ephesians and St. John's Gospel. St. Paul proclaims: "*Christ will give you light.*" In the Gospel, Jesus refers to Himself as the "Light of the World." While Jesus cured the blind man of physical blindness, the Pharisees remained blind to Jesus' message. In both readings, light is contrasted with darkness. Darkness represents evil, while the light symbolizes virtue and salvation. Faithful stewards strive to live in Christ's light in order to draw closer in discipleship with Jesus.

Fifth Sunday of Lent

In his Gospel, St. John tells of Lazarus dying and Jesus raising him from the dead. This miracle foretells Jesus' own resurrection. Jesus showed His power and glory by giving Lazarus back the gift of life. Through the centuries, the Church has unwaveringly embraced the sanctity and preservation of human life, adamantly stressing that life must be protected from conception to natural death. As Christian stewards, we know life is a gift from God and uphold the Church's teachings on its sanctity against the "culture of death" of modern society that tolerates the destruction of life at all stages, from embryonic stem cells to euthanasia.

Palm Sunday of the Lord's Passion

In St. Matthew's processional Gospel, we witness Jesus' triumphant entry into Jerusalem. When He humbly entered the city on a donkey, the Jewish people were elated because they thought He would be the king to overthrow Roman rule. However, the tide turned quickly against Jesus when they realized His kingdom is not of this world. In St. Matthew's Passion account, the people have Him condemned and crucified. Jesus made the ultimate sacrifice — His life — to give us the gift of eternal salvation. Do we, as Christian stewards, gratefully acknowledge His great gift by returning to the Lord in thanksgiving all that He gives us — our time, God-given talents, and financial resources — to further His kingdom?



Easter Sunday

In St. John's Gospel narrative, Peter is the first to enter the Lord's tomb. But when the other disciple with Peter entered, "*He saw and believed.*" And yet, we are told they did not fully understand that Jesus had to rise from the dead. In the Acts of the Apostles, we see how Peter and the others came to firmly believe in the risen Lord. What actions do we embrace as Christian stewards as we strive to be closer disciples of Jesus? Daily prayer, nurturing our families, sharing our God-given talents, and, in gratitude, giving back to God our first fruits are solid steps to discipleship in the Lord.

Second Sunday of Easter (Divine Mercy Sunday)

Faith is the common theme in the readings from St. Peter's First Letter and St. John's Gospel. Peter encourages the Christian community in Asia Minor, "*Although you have not seen, you love Him; even though you do not see Him now yet believe in Him.*" Jesus admonishes Thomas, "*Blessed are those who have not seen and have believed.*" Faith in Jesus, through the grace of the Holy Spirit, is a unique and powerful gift from God. It is far beyond the notion of "if I cannot see it, I do not believe it." As Christian stewards, we strive to share God's gifts of time, talent, and treasure out of gratitude for His gift of faith.

Third Sunday of Easter

In St. Luke's Gospel, Jesus encountered two of His disciples on the road to Emmaus after His resurrection, but they did not recognize the Lord until He broke bread with them that evening and opened their minds and hearts to the messianic message in the Scriptures. St. Peter, in the Acts of the Apostles and his First Letter, likewise encourages us to recognize Jesus as our Savior. As Christian stewards, where do we recognize our Lord? Jesus is truly present in the Eucharist to give us strength and to forgive sins. Yet, some mistakenly see the Eucharist as only symbolic.

Fourth Sunday of Easter

Modern day shepherds say that sheep recognize a shepherd's voice and will follow commands. Christ as the Good Shepherd is the common theme in the passages from Psalm 23, St. Peter's First Letter, and St. John's Gospel. In the Acts of the Apostles, Peter urges the house of Israel to repent and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ — two direct commands from our Lord. In our quest for discipleship, we, too, as Christian stewards, understand that Christ calls us to repentance and renewal of baptismal promises, thus leading to our conversion of heart and mind to a new way of life. Are we open to this invitation from the Lord, the Good Shepherd?

Fifth Sunday of Easter

The Liturgy of the Word gives us powerful messages on stewardship. In St. John's Gospel, Jesus reminds the Apostles — and us — that He is "*the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.*" In the Acts of the Apostles, we learn the importance of sharing our resources with others. St. Peter reminds us that accepting our Lord's gift of faith makes us special to God, but the cost of faith is high. Christian stewards know that faith is a gift we build



from the graces flowing from daily prayer, regular Mass attendance to celebrate the Eucharist, and reading Sacred Scripture. In our continuing stewardship journey, are we using God's graces and gifts to build our faith and further His kingdom?

Sixth Sunday of Easter

In his First Letter, St. Peter encourages the faithful to stand ready to explain and defend their faith in Christ. In St. John's Gospel, Jesus tells His disciples that He will give them an Advocate — a Spirit of Truth to strengthen their faith in Him. The passage from the Acts of the Apostles illustrates the power of the Holy Spirit given to believers in Christ. A moral force sent to us by God, the Holy Spirit strengthens faithful stewards to defend the Church's teachings against attacks on life, marriage, and other moral challenges by today's secular society.

The Ascension of the Lord

(Celebrated Thursday following the Sixth Sunday of Easter or on the Seventh Sunday of Easter)

The theme of "Baptism in the Holy Spirit" is woven through the Liturgy of the Word readings as Jesus directs His disciples to go forth into the world. Christ's promise of the Holy Spirit is a tremendous gift to us. The Holy Spirit strengthens us on our stewardship journey which goes hand-in-hand with evangelization as individuals and as a parish communion. Welcoming parishioners and newcomers to Mass, or inviting those who have not been attending the Eucharistic celebration, are forms of evangelization. Demonstrating our faith by how we live our lives is another way of bringing people to the Lord. For Christian stewards, the ways we evangelize with the guidance of the Holy Spirit are limitless.

Seventh Sunday of Easter

(When the Ascension is not celebrated on Sunday)

Fervent prayer links the readings from the Acts of the Apostles and St. John's Gospel. In Acts, we see the Apostles, Jesus' mother Mary, and other friends of Jesus gathered in communal prayer after the Lord's Ascension. This became standard practice before any major activity in the early Christian Church. Our Lord prayed directly to the Father, giving glory to God through Whom Jesus is glorified. Prayer is a fundamental principle of Christian stewardship; to grow closer to Jesus and make stewardship a way of life, we need to make time for daily prayer. Jesus showed us how to pray. Like the early Christians, we, as Christian stewards, should pray before meetings and major events and decisions in our lives. True peace comes from frequent prayer.

Pentecost Sunday

The readings for Pentecost rightly focus on God's gift of the Holy Spirit and the grace and strength He brought to the Apostles and the early Church. St. Paul, in his First Letter to the Corinthians, brings this to the present day by emphasizing that all spiritual gifts, forms of service, and workings come from the same God, through Christ, our Lord, and the Holy Spirit. This is a powerful stewardship passage. We, as Christian stewards, acknowledge that each and every member of the Body of Christ, through the grace of God, is abundantly blessed with talents — talents that can be used to build up the parish communion. What special gifts can we offer to the Church in gratitude for our many blessings?



Trinity Sunday

The readings of Trinity Sunday characterize the three persons of the Trinity. The passage from the Book of Exodus illustrates the mercy of God the Father. In his Second Letter to the Corinthians, St. Paul prays for the fellowship of the Holy Spirit for all believers. And St. John proclaims in his Gospel, “*God so loved the world that He gave His only Son, so that everyone who believes in Him ... might have eternal life.*” God, through His mercy, gives His Son and the grace of the Holy Spirit to all of us. How are we, as Christian stewards, giving back to God a return of our time, talent, and treasure in awe and gratitude for these wondrous gifts?

Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ (Corpus Christi)

The readings for the Feast of Corpus Christi present symbols of the Eucharist and expound its profound mystery. The Book of Exodus tells of God’s gift of manna to the Israelites wandering in the desert. Both St. Paul and St. John emphasize the real presence of the body and blood of Jesus in the Eucharist. Jesus, in St. John’s Gospel, especially brings this home for us: “*Whoever eats My flesh and drinks My blood has eternal life, and I will raise him on the last day.*” Our Lord promises eternal salvation, and His words bring great hope and comfort even in the most difficult of times. Conversion of heart and mind occurs in faithful stewards who reflect on this beautiful Gospel passage.

Fourteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time

In St. Matthew’s Gospel, Jesus states, “*Come to Me, all who labor and are burdened, and I will give you rest.*” He also encourages us to follow His example of humility as illustrated in the passage from the prophet Zechariah. These words are comforting to Christian disciples during difficult times. As we practice stewardship of God’s gifts of our time, talent, and treasure, we strive to put full faith and trust in our Lord, Jesus Christ.

Fifteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time

The readings from Isaiah, Psalm 65, and St. Matthew’s Gospel all reference fertile soil planted with good seed. Jesus explains this “seed” is the Word of God Who gives His special grace to those who not only receive His Word, but live by it. To help us live this way, our Holy Father, Pope Benedict XVI, encourages Catholics to study the Bible. Christian stewards who embrace reading or praying Scripture daily find peace and develop a deeper relationship with our Lord, Jesus Christ.

Sixteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time

In St. Matthew’s Gospel, Jesus offered to the crowd three parables explaining the reign of God. In all three, the kingdom is compared to something that grows — good seed, mustard seed, and yeast — and is set in motion by human efforts. Full realization of heaven, though, comes from God’s grace, which strengthens us against evil. We are encouraged each day to reflect on what we are doing to get to heaven. Our actions should always be our focus. We, as Christian stewards, know our Lord will hold us accountable for our stewardship of His gifts of our time, talent, and treasure, and how we used these gifts to further His kingdom.



Seventeenth Sunday in Ordinary Time

In the passage from St. Matthew's Gospel, Jesus illustrates the kingdom of heaven through parables. In the first parable, He tells of a man who finds a buried treasure; in the second, a merchant searches and finds a valuable pearl. Each sells all that they have to acquire these treasures. These lessons teach us to seek what is important to bring us closer to Jesus. We, as Christian stewards, know that denying self is a direct path to discipleship. Through sacrificial sharing of our time, talent, and treasure with our parish communion, neighbor, and the needy, we can experience great joy.

Eighteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time

We learn in the readings from Isaiah, Psalm 145, and St. Matthew's Gospel that God nourishes His people both physically and spiritually. St. Matthew describes the miracle of feeding 5,000 followers from only five loaves and two fish. This story, found in all four Gospels, foreshadows our Lord's Last Supper, where He instituted the Eucharist. At every Mass, through the mystery of bread and wine, we celebrate the true presence of our Lord's Body and Blood. We, as Christian stewards and disciples of Christ, believe this Eucharistic gift to be the "source and summit" of spiritual strength, one that encourages us to embrace stewardship as a way of life.

Nineteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time

In the Liturgy of the Word, the readings from St. Paul's Letter to the Romans and St. Matthew's Gospel speak about faith. St. Paul was upset with the Jewish community because of their lack of faith in his preaching of Christ as the Messiah. In the Gospel, St. Peter tried to meet Christ outside of the boat tossed about by the wind, but began to sink because of his lack of faith. We, as Christian stewards, should seek to increase our faith in Jesus by praying daily, reading the Bible, attending Mass regularly to celebrate the Eucharist, and participating in the Sacrament of Reconciliation. As the prophet Elijah experienced, sometimes the Spirit of God is very quiet — we have to listen for Him and His comforting message.

Twentieth Sunday in Ordinary Time

The readings from the prophet Isaiah, St. Paul's Letter to the Romans, and St. Matthew's Gospel teach that from Old Testament times to Jesus' and the Apostles' day, Jews, Gentiles, and all who followed God's will and commands were welcomed into the worship community. By our Lord's death and resurrection, all people have the opportunity to gain eternal salvation. Welcoming strangers and showing hospitality is a sure sign of a stewardship parish. As we strive to promote stewardship as a way of life, are we a welcoming parish?

Twenty-First Sunday in Ordinary Time

The image of a key to symbolize authority is found in both of the readings from Isaiah and St. Matthew's Gospel. God, through the prophet Isaiah, called Eliakim to be the new master of the palace in Jerusalem, placing the "*key of the House of David*" upon his shoulder. In the Gospel, Jesus gave St. Peter "*the keys to the kingdom of heaven*" to be the "rock" or foundation



of the Church. Both men accepted God's call as well as the responsibility that followed. We, as Christian stewards, are all called to work in the Lord's vineyard — and to further God's kingdom through our abundant gifts. Are we open to that challenge, that call?

Twenty-Second Sunday in Ordinary Time

In the Liturgy of the Word, a central theme emerges of building a closer relationship with God, through our Lord, Jesus Christ. Although reluctant, the prophet Jeremiah, because of his close relationship with God, was inspired to do God's will to prophesy against the community leaders' idol worship and injustice to the poor as a warning to the people. The psalmist describes the close relationship between God and the worshipper seeking after Him. St. Paul encourages a close relationship with God through mind and body, together comprising a single living and spiritual sacrifice to the Lord. Jesus presents the ultimate scenario for discipleship: Draw closer to the Lord by losing oneself for His sake, taking up the cross, and following in His footsteps. Christian stewards are called to a deeper relationship with Christ. How are we responding to Jesus' call to live our discipleship by grateful sharing of our gifts of time, talent, and treasure with the parish communion and the needy?

Twenty-Third Sunday in Ordinary Time

In St. Matthew's Gospel, Jesus teaches us to reconcile with those who wrong us, and to do so through prayer. Prayer is a fundamental principle of Christian stewardship; it is direct and personal communication with the Lord. Jesus goes a step further when He proclaims that when even two or three disciples are joined in prayer, He is in their midst. Personal prayer then becomes communal prayer. As we strive to draw closer to the Lord, we, as Christian stewards, know the importance of making time for daily prayer. This extends to weekly prayer with our parish communion when we participate in the Mass — the highest form of communal prayer. During Mass, Jesus is present with us in our communal prayer and present in the Eucharist that provides healing and strength. What a powerful combination! What a tremendous gift!

Twenty-Fourth Sunday in Ordinary Time

The theme of forgiveness links the readings from Sirach, Psalm 103, and St. Matthew's Gospel. St. Peter surely was surprised with Jesus' response to his question about how many times he should forgive his brother: "*I say not seven times, but seventy times seven times.*" In other words, our need to forgive is unlimited. Jesus also teaches that forgiveness must be from the heart, or else our Father in heaven will treat us like the unmerciful servant in the parable. As Christian stewards, we are called to a higher standard of conduct. Even though this is not easy in a world that seeks revenge and paybacks, Jesus does not want us to hold grudges or bitterness toward those who have wronged us. Let us pray for His gifts of healing and forgiving grace when we find ourselves in these challenging situations.

Twenty-Fifth Sunday in Ordinary Time

In the reading from the prophet Isaiah and St. Matthew's Gospel, God does not act according to human expectations, and His generosity is not outdone. God, speaking through Isaiah, states, "*For My thoughts are not your thoughts, nor your ways My ways, says the Lord.*" Jesus tells the



parable of heaven being like the landowner who welcomes laborers into his vineyard at different times, but generously pays them all equally at the day's end. God gives us His abundant gifts for us to be generous with the poor and needy, because Jesus tells us, "*the last will be first, and the first will be last.*" Does our stewardship reflect the sharing of our abundant blessings with those less fortunate? Have we chosen to follow God's way whatever the cost?

Twenty-Sixth Sunday in Ordinary Time

The readings from the prophet Ezekiel and St. Matthew's Gospel teach us about repentance of sin. God, speaking through Ezekiel, made it clear that everyone is responsible for his or her sins. Those who repent will have their lives preserved. In the Gospel, Jesus tells the parable about two sons who are asked to work in the vineyard. The first son agreed to work but then failed to show up. The second son initially said, "No," but later repented and went to work as his father had asked. We, as Christian stewards, acknowledge our sinful nature and realize that sin blocks our relationship with Jesus. God's healing and forgiving grace is available through the Sacrament of Reconciliation. Do we regularly participate in this sacrament, which provides forgiveness and peace?

Twenty-Seventh Sunday in Ordinary Time

In St. Matthew's Gospel, Jesus tells a parable to the chief priests and elders about the landowner (God), who planted a vineyard. He describes how the tenants (the Israelites) rejected the servants (God's prophets), and even killed the landowner's son (Jesus, symbolizing His sacrifice for our sins). Jesus becomes the cornerstone the builders rejected. Faithful stewards welcome all who come to the parish communion to celebrate their Catholic faith, regardless of race, ethnic background, and other distinctions that tend to separate us.

Twenty-Eighth Sunday in Ordinary Time

The Liturgy of the Word readings teach us the many aspects of stewardship. The prophet Isaiah teaches that God will provide for us if we trust in Him. St. Matthew describes, through the parable of the wedding feast, God's call for all to join Him in holiness, but sadly how many reject Him. And, in his Letter to the Philippians, St. Paul thanks the generous community for their financial support, given not out of St. Paul's needs, but from their own need to give. God calls us, as Christian stewards, to give the "first fruits" of our labor back to Him out of gratitude for His many blessings. This sacrificial offering is pleasing to God because we forego something in order to give back to Him. When confronted with difficult financial challenges, we should be encouraged to make a leap of faith in our giving and trust that God's generosity is never outdone.

Twenty-Ninth Sunday in Ordinary Time

God, through the prophet Isaiah, proclaims He is Lord and there is no other. Jesus reminds us that while God expects us, as good stewards, to pay our fair share of government taxes, God's way should be paramount in our lives. Moreover, when governments support immoral threats to human life and injustice, we, as Christ's disciples, are called to stand against this misuse of funds and authority. As we strive to make stewardship a way of life in this modern day of relative morality, we must make drawing close to Jesus and His moral teaching our priority.



Thirtieth Sunday in Ordinary Time

Jesus teaches us to love God with our whole heart, soul, and mind, and to love our neighbor as our self. These are the two greatest commandments, and are actually described in the Old Testament. In the Book of Exodus, Moses shows examples of helping strangers, widows, and orphans out of compassion and kindness. Jesus challenges each of us, as His disciples, to return His special love for us. Giving total love to God is not easy in a society that tempts and distracts us with the lure of worldly goods and possessions. We, as Christian stewards, through our Lord's grace, acknowledge that all blessings flow from God and, in gratitude, we are called to share these blessings with the poor and needy. Are we responding to the needs of the poor? Is our love of neighbor evident in our actions?

Thirty-First Sunday in Ordinary Time

Jesus states in St. Matthew's Gospel, "*The greatest among you will be the one who serves the rest.*" Faithful stewards humbly acknowledge that all blessings come from God and, in gratitude, use these gifts and talents to further His kingdom through service to others. Service begins by giving our God-given time and talent to our parish communion and the larger community. What is Jesus calling each of us to do for our parish?

Thirty-Second Sunday in Ordinary Time

St. Matthew's Gospel and St. Paul's First Letter to the Thessalonians are linked by their discussion of the afterlife. St. Paul gives hope to those who have lost loved ones — their deceased family members are alive in Christ, as are they. Jesus tells the parable of the wise and foolish virgins who wait for the bridegroom. The wise virgins are prepared to enter the wedding feast — the reign of God; the foolish are not. God blesses each of us abundantly with time, talent, and financial resources. We know that we will be held accountable to the Lord at the end of life for how we used and multiplied these gifts in His service. If we were called home today, how would we account our stewardship report to the Lord?

Thirty-Third Sunday in Ordinary Time

The passage from St. Matthew's Gospel is an excellent teaching on stewardship. In the parable, the master — God — entrusted property to his servants while he went away. The servants symbolize us as we strive to be disciples of Jesus. The "talents" — money, in that day — represent the many gifts God gives to each of us. It is important to note that in the parable, the first two servants invest according to their respective God-given talents. The fearful, lazy servant represents those unwilling to use their talents in service to God and neighbor. As a result, the Master threw that servant into darkness. This parable teaches us that faithful stewards who use their gifts to further Christ's mission on earth will inherit the kingdom of God. Those who use their time, talent, and treasure for their own selfish desires sadly turn away from God's call to discipleship and good works, and will suffer the consequences.

Christ the King

In St. Matthew's Gospel, Jesus gives clear directions to His disciples that they must serve others through acts of Christian mercy and charity in order to enter the kingdom of God: "*Whatever you*



did for one of the least brothers of mine, you did for Me.” Blessed Mother Teresa modeled her entire life and ministry on these directives by serving the “poorest of the poor” on the streets of Calcutta. May we follow her example of discipleship and, as Christian stewards, accept God’s call to holiness. May we be inspired by her example of love, charity, and mercy to open our hearts and minds to serve and share our abundant blessings with the poor, the sick, and strangers in today’s world.

