



ALL SAINTS' CHURCH

THIS SUNDAY September 9 & BEYOND”

“You Can Be a Steward of God's Blessings”



The familiar word “STEWARDSHIP” will not be present in any of the appointed bible readings for this coming Sunday, September 9. But the MEANING of that word will be. Like a cut and sparkling diamond, there are many facets to the meaning of Stewardship, especially in Christian teaching. We won’t see or hear of all of those sparkling facets on

Sunday. But there are some that I’d like to share with you.

Just to start, being a steward is being someone who takes care of something. My wife and I have a dog (her name is Lucy, from Luz, Lucia, as in Light). Well, technically, the dog is hers, given to her by our daughters at particularly difficult time after our beloved 17 year old dog died. But we are both stewards of our dog. And we both love Lucy.

Now, you see already some of the facets of stewardship: taking care of something or someone, and as in the case of our dog, there is a facet in stewardship of personal emotional connection. That’s a lot already. As well, there is the facet of a SHARED stewardship, even when there is a primary ownership or responsibility.

The word steward first shows up in some translations of the bible in the first few chapters of the first book of the bible, Genesis. God creates everything, and then appoints Man to “take care of it all”, that is, Man becomes the Steward of God’s creation — everything and everyone in it.

After reading my introduction in this reflection, its almost a no-brainer when you hear on Sunday the section of the letter from James where he says, “Every generous act of giving, with every perfect gift, is from above, coming down from the Father of lights,…”

All the lessons, though, illustrate some of the facets of stewardship, but especially the very important point of stewardship as hospitality, and the joy that a life lived for others can bring.

The first reading is from the Prophet Isaiah, starting off with a powerful message of hope meant to be shared, and “sharing” is in fact one of the outcomes of good Stewardship in hospitality. “Say to those whose hearts are frightened: Be strong, fear not! Here is your God, he comes with vindication; with divine recompense he comes to save you. Then will the eyes of the blind be opened, the ears of the deaf be cleared.” What a message of encouragement the prophet is instructed to give!

One of the core agreements we make in our Baptism is that we “modern-day prophets” are entrusted with this same message. We, too, are called to share the Good News of salvation with others, starting in our own families and circle of friends and extending to all in our parish and community. Sharing this Good News is the true goal of hospitality, a facet of Stewardship.

Continuing that thought from James that I mentioned already, the second reading, beginning with a very strong word telling us all what and from where and from whom(!) we have received anything that is good at all, tells us to “be doers of the Word and not hearers only, deluding yourselves.” In other words, talk is cheap, and actions speak louder than words. It is not enough to show up at Mass on Sunday as a passive observer. That is vain worship; it is not giving our hearts over to God.

Here James tells us one part of what is pleasing to God (which makes it worship): “Religion that is pure and undefiled before God and the Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their affliction, and to keep oneself unstained from the world.” Do you see that facet of stewardship especially the reach out to the most vulnerable members of society? James has just made the connection between good stewardship and true worship of God. Wow!

The Gospel reading from Mark gives further illustration of hospitality and service, and the connection between the two. In this passage we find Jesus on the go, and “people brought to Him a deaf man who had a speech impediment and begged Him to lay His hand on him.”

These people had already heard the Good News that Jesus was preaching. In response, they reached out to a man who literally could not hear and brought him close to Jesus so that he could receive the Good News, too. This is true service. This is hospitality at its finest. This is the stewardship – OUR stewardship – of the love and power of Jesus to the world. And then Jesus takes it, as the Good Steward he is, from there. What wonderful Good News. Jesus responds immediately, opening the deaf man’s ears and removing his speech impediment! And what about the people whose service and hospitality had made this encounter possible? Jesus blessed them for it, confirming their faith to such a degree that they were “exceedingly astonished” and could not stop themselves from proclaiming the miracle they had witnessed.

This scripture passage illustrates a wonderful aspect of stewardship living – we simply cannot outdo our God in generosity. The more we give of ourselves to welcome and serve others for His sake, the more He blesses and strengthens our own faith. With these things in mind, we can see the beginnings of how Stewardship gives us a concrete means to examine our lives in three fundamental areas — the use of our time, our talents, and our material gifts. Even better? We will never be able to out-give God as we act as his stewards.

Fr. Robert G. Eaton, Interim Rector

Readings for this Sunday – The Sixteenth Sunday after Pentecost
Isaiah 35:4-7a Psalm 146:4-9 James 1:17-27 Mark 7:31-37

CALENDAR

SUNDAY: The Sixteenth Sunday after Pentecost

8:00a Low Mass (Church)

10:30a Solemn High Mass (Church)

—*The entrance to the church is on 6th Avenue*—

Note: Coffee Hour & Fellowship follow the Mass in the Parish Hall.

MONDAY: 7:00p (AA) Doctors' Group (Fireside Room)

TUESDAY: Noon Mass (St. Mary's Chapel)

FRIDAY: AA Meetings

8:00p Ladies' Group (Fireside Room)

8:15p Men's Group (Parish Hall)