



*Stewardship Reflections  
on the Liturgy of the Word*

Reading Reflections – Cycle B

## STEWARDSHIP REFLECTIONS ON THE LITURGY OF THE WORD

### CYCLE B (Mark)

The following reflections on the Cycle B readings of the Liturgy of the Word are designed to stimulate your own thoughts and reflections on God's message to us as Christian stewards. Your reflections and thoughts, as well as the reflections presented here, can then be the basis for homilies, lay witness testimony, and other guideposts along your stewardship journey.

#### First Sunday of Advent

First Reading – Isaiah 63:16-17, 19; 64:2-7

- As good Christian stewards, we learn to surrender and let God mold our lives.

Psalm 80:2-3, 15-16, 18-19

- As practicing stewards, we put our full faith in God, knowing He will be with us and protect us.

Second Reading – 1 Corinthians 1:3-9

- In anticipation of Christ's revelation, as Christian stewards we never lack in spiritual blessings, and we give thanks and praise for these gifts.
- God calls us to fellowship with His Son, Jesus Christ.

Gospel Reading – Mark 13:33-37

- Being watchful, we as wise and faithful stewards know that God will hold us accountable on how we used His gifts in this life to further His kingdom.

#### Stewardship Thought

We are the servants of God, each with his or her own task. We will be judged good stewards if, at His coming, He finds us ready and conscientiously pursuing the tasks to which we have been called (Used with permission from Our Sunday Visitor, *Stewardship by the Book: Bulletin Bits Based on the Sunday Readings*, by Sharon Hueckel, 2004 edition, page 15).

#### Second Sunday of Advent

First Reading – Isaiah 40:1-5, 9-11

- God is all-powerful, yet comforting to His people.
- As Christian stewards, we know that Jesus "feeds His flock" spiritually through our partaking of the Eucharist.

Psalm 85:9-14

- Christian stewards acknowledge God's abundant blessings bestowed upon them and, in turn, we use these blessings to promote kindness and truth, justice and peace.



Second Reading – 2 Peter 3:8-14

- Mindful of a finite life here on earth, and knowing we must give an accounting of God’s blessings, good Christian stewards strive to live virtuous lives strengthened by regular partaking of the Lord’s Eucharistic gift.

Gospel – Mark 1:1-8

- Through our Baptism, we are called to be disciples of Christ. Like John the Baptist, Jesus also stresses the importance of repentance. Advent is a good time to participate in the Sacrament of Reconciliation.

Stewardship Thought

John the Baptist’s call to repentance is echoed in the U.S. Bishops’ Pastoral Letter on stewardship: “*Christians must beg God for the grace of conversion: the grace to know who they are, to whom they belong, how they are to live — the grace to repent and change and grow, the grace to become good disciples and stewards*” (Our Sunday Visitor, *ibid.*, page 15).

### **Immaculate Conception (December 8)**

First Reading – Genesis 3:9-15, 20

- Do we try to follow God’s will as stewards in the model of Mary Immaculate, or our own in disobedience of His commands?

Psalm 98:1-4

- Good stewards praise God in joyful song for His blessing of our salvation.

Second Reading – Ephesians 1:3-6, 11-12

- Christian stewards understand that God has chosen us to do His will for His praise and glory.

Gospel – Luke 1:26-38

- Mary is the model steward — completely trusting in God and answering His call to do His will. We are truly thankful to God for the gift of His Son.

Stewardship Thought

Mary’s Immaculate Conception prepared her for her unique role as the Mother of God. We, too, have been given all the gifts we need to do the work to which God calls us. Oh Mary, conceived without sin, pray for us that we may have the courage to say “yes!” when God calls (Our Sunday Visitor, *ibid.*, page 35).

### **Third Sunday of Advent**

First Reading – Isaiah 61:1-2, 10-11

- Christian stewards rejoice in God’s gifts to us, likened to beautiful jewels or gardens, and understand we must follow the Lord’s example by sharing them with others in love and justice.



Psalm – Luke 1:46-50, 53-54

- Mary, in her Magnificat, responds to Elizabeth with joy that she accepts her call to be the Mother of God. Do we, as Christian stewards, also respond joyfully to God’s call?

Second Reading – 1 Thessalonians 5:16-24

- The Christian steward seeks to develop a deeper prayer life to draw closer to the Lord by giving Him constant thanks and becoming holy.

Gospel – John 1:6-8, 19-28

- John the Baptist came to “*testify to the light*,” Who is Jesus. Does our life reflect that we believe Jesus is our light and salvation?

Stewardship Thought

All of the people in today’s readings — the prophet Isaiah, the Virgin Mary, St. Paul, St. John the Baptist — seemed to understand clearly and rejoice in what God was calling them to be and to do. Do I? (Our Sunday Visitor, *ibid.*, page 15).

#### **Fourth Sunday of Advent**

First Reading – 2 Samuel 7:1-5, 8-11, 16

- In this first reading, God speaks to David through His prophet Nathan and promises a time of peace in David’s reign to build a “*house of God*.” As Christian stewards, how do we use our time, talents, and treasure to build God’s kingdom?

Psalm 89:2-5, 27, 29

- God is ever faithful. As stewards, how loyal are we in following His commandments?

Second Reading – Romans 16:25-27

- God, through Jesus Christ, reveals Himself that we may believe for His glory and our salvation.

Gospel – Luke 1:26-28

- Mary without hesitation accepted her earthly vocation as “Mother of God.” Are we, as Christian stewards, through prayer and discernment, prepared to say “yes” to God’s call?

Stewardship Thought

In the first reading, God promises King David that His house and His kingdom will endure forever. It is through Mary’s “Yes” — “*I am the handmaid of the Lord. Let it be done to me as you say*.” — that promise finds fulfillment. See Luke 1:38 (Our Sunday Visitor, *ibid.*, page 15).

## **Christmas (Vigil)**

First Reading – Isaiah 62:1-5

- God promises a new day of salvation for us. For this, we must always be thankful to Him.

Psalm 89:4-5, 16-17, 27, 29

- Our Lord God is our Rock and our Savior. We gratefully rejoice in His kindness and faithfulness.

Second Reading – Acts of the Apostles 13:16-17, 22-25

- God brought forth Jesus, our Savior, from the house of David. Christian stewards repent for the times we fail to be grateful for this great gift.

Gospel – Matthew 1:1-25

- “Emmanuel” means “God is with us.” Let us as stewards follow the model of Mary and Joseph and put our complete trust in God.

Stewardship Thought

All the earth rejoices in praise and glory to God that the ancient prophecies are fulfilled in Jesus Christ our Savior. As Christian stewards, our gratitude should be boundless.

## **Christmas (Midnight)**

First Reading – Isaiah 9:1-16

- Christ is in our midst today. Do we recognize Him?
- The lights of Christmas remind us that Christ is the light of the world.

Psalm 96:1-3, 11-13

- Let us rejoice with all praise, honor, and glory to Christ our Savior.

Second Reading – Titus 2:11-14

- As Christian stewards, disciples of Christ, we reflect on His redeeming grace in our lives.

Gospel – Luke 2:1-14

- There was “*no room for them in the inn.*” Do we welcome Christ into our hearts?
- The glory of God was proclaimed to lowly shepherds. Are we “poor in spirit”?

Stewardship Thought

The birth of Jesus was part of God’s plan for the redemption of mankind. God also has a plan for each of us. Are we open to receive His call to share in His plan?



## **Christmas (Dawn)**

First Reading – Isaiah 62:11-12

- Our redemption by the Lord is the true joy of Christmas.

Psalm 97:1, 6, 11-12

- Give thanks to the Lord, our light and our salvation.

Second Reading – Titus 3:4-7

- In Baptism, because of God’s mercy, we are renewed by the Holy Spirit through Jesus Christ. We must be grateful for this great gift.

Gospel – Luke 2:15-20

- The shepherds answered God’s call proclaimed by the angels to seek Christ and worship Him. Do we make that same effort to seek Him?

Stewardship Thought

Pray that God gives us wisdom to understand His will and the strength and courage to act as His disciples.

## **Christmas (Day)**

First Reading – Isaiah 52:7-10

- Like the Israelites of old, today’s Christian stewards also proclaim, “*God is King*”!
- Jesus Christ brings us His Good News of salvation.

Psalm 98:1-6

- As Christian stewards, we are encouraged to use our talents to praise and thank God in prayer, song, and instrument for His great gifts to us.

Second Reading – Hebrews 1:1-6

- Our heavenly Father proclaims Jesus His Son and tells the angels to worship Him as a reflection of God’s glory. Can we do less?

Gospel Reading – John 1:1-18

- The Word became flesh; God became man. God gives us the greatest gift of all — His Son, Jesus, Who will light for us the path to eternal salvation.

Stewardship Thought

The shepherds who heard the joyous news from the angels on that first Christmas night and then hurried to find the infant Savior must surely have been changed by that experience. How has His coming changed my life? (Our Sunday Visitor, *ibid.*, page 15).

## **Feast of the Holy Family**

First Reading – Sirach 3:2-6, 12-14

- Good parents are a blessing from God. God commands us as good Christian stewards to honor and care for our parents whatever the circumstances may be.

Psalm 128:1-5

- As Christian stewards, we realize our spouse and children are true blessings from God and are to be nurtured.

Second Reading – Colossians 3:12-21

- As God's chosen ones, we are to put on compassion, reconciliation, and love for one another as members of the Body of Christ.
- A good steward does everything in the name of Jesus, follows His Word, and prays and sings gratefully to God.
- The family is called the domestic Church. Love and respect one another.

Gospel – Luke 2:22-40

- With great joy, Mary and Joseph manifested their gift of faith in Jesus by presenting Him in the Temple, to be thanked and praised by those longing for salvation.

Stewardship Thought

Parents who practice good stewardship use their time and talents to pass on their faith, to educate, to nurture, and to protect their children.

## **New Year's Day – Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God**

First Reading - Numbers 6:22-27

- Christian stewards gratefully recognize that God blesses us and acknowledge that true peace and happiness come from Him through His grace.

Psalm 67:2-3, 5-6, 8

- As stewards, we give God glory and praise for His gift of our salvation through His mercy.

Second Reading – Galatians 4:4-7

- As Christian stewards, we understand we are children and heirs of God through the gift of the Holy Spirit.

Gospel – Luke 2:16-21

- The shepherds went to Bethlehem at God's instruction through the angels. Do we as good stewards listen to God's call and then act on it in our lives?
- Mary, Mother of God, teach us how to be your Son's disciples.

Stewardship Thought

The first reading today recalls God's special blessing upon the Israelites. The Lord has been gracious to us as well, pouring into our hearts that spirit which knows Him as Father and makes us His children. May we, like Mary, treasure these things in our hearts and live gratefully (Our Sunday Visitor, *ibid.*, page 16).

## **Second Sunday after Christmas**

First Reading – Sirach 24:1-4, 8-12

- Good stewards accept God’s call to live in Him and His commands.

Psalm 147:12-15, 19-20

- Christian stewards glorify the Lord in all we do and say in thanksgiving for His many blessings.

Second Reading – Ephesians 1:3-6, 15-18

- Our heavenly Father gives us His Son and every spiritual blessing. As stewards, we demonstrate our gratitude by striving to be holy and filled with love for God and one another.

Gospel – John 1:1-18

- In Jesus, the Word became flesh, filled with redeeming love for us, which we share in gratitude with others.

Stewardship Thought

During this Christmas season, we rejoice that our Savior has come. As stewards, do we answer His call to follow His Word?

## **The Epiphany of the Lord**

First Reading – Isaiah 60:1-6

- The prophet Isaiah paints a picture of the fullness of God’s gifts to us which should inspire us as Christian stewards to give back to the Lord for His praise and glory.
- Christ is the light that guides us to Him.

Psalm 72:1-2, 7-8, 10-13

- God with His mercy and justice exhorts us as His stewards to praise Him by sharing our time, talent, and treasure with the poor and oppressed.

Second Reading – Ephesians 3:2-3, 5-6

- God, through Christ, gives His gift of grace to all people and welcomes the baptized as members of the Body of Christ and heirs of God’s Kingdom.

Gospel – Matthew 2:1-12

- By the story of the Magi’s gifts to Jesus, Christian stewards are reminded how much God blesses us with many gifts. We must use and return them gratefully.
- The Magi journeyed far, with great effort, to pay homage to our King. Do we make time for Him in our lives? Do we trust God in all things?

Stewardship Thought

The three wise men who came from the East to pay homage to the infant Jesus brought Him rich gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh as part of their worship. What gifts have I brought to this celebration to offer to the newborn Savior? (Our Sunday, Visitor, *ibid.*, page 16).



## **The Baptism of the Lord**

First Reading – Isaiah 42:1-4, 6-7

- A faithful steward accepts God-given talents gratefully and shares them in love and justice with those in need.

Psalm 29:1-4, 3, 9-10

- In gratitude, Christian stewards give glory and praise to God.

Second Reading – Acts of the Apostles 10:34-38

- Christian stewards acknowledge that God’s gifts of faith and peace are attainable by all who act according to His commandments through Christ, Who is Lord of all.

Gospel – Mark 1:7-11

- John’s Baptism of Jesus encourages us as Christian stewards to reflect on our own Baptism and continually seek to do God’s will to please Him.

### **Stewardship Thought**

Today we celebrate the Baptism of the Lord. The U.S. Bishops’ Pastoral on stewardship reminds us that Baptism gives all of His disciples a share in His priestly work and calls them “*to offer up the world and all that is in it — especially themselves — to the Lord of all*” (Our Sunday Visitor, *ibid.*, page 18).

## **Second Sunday in Ordinary Time**

First Reading – 1 Samuel 3:3-10, 19

- As Christian stewards, do we follow Samuel’s example in answering the Lord’s call for us to serve Him?

Psalm 40:2, 4, 7-10

- Christian stewards enthusiastically praise and give thanks to God for His gifts to us.

Second Reading – 1 Corinthians 6:13-15, 17-20

- St. Paul reminds us we are temples of the Holy Spirit. Are we good stewards of the spiritual, psychological, emotional, and physical health of our own bodies?

Gospel – John 1:35-42

- Andrew, in today’s Gospel, tells Peter that they had found the Messiah. What an immediate conversion of mind and heart these two disciples must have experienced. Have we, as Christian stewards, found Christ in our lives through our own conversion?

### **Stewardship Thought**

In today’s first reading, we hear Samuel respond eagerly, “*Here I am!*” each time the Lord calls him. May we, too, be listening for the call of God in our lives and be ready to say like the psalmist, “*Hear am I, Lord; I come to do your will.*” See 1 Samuel 3:4; Psalm 40 (Our Sunday Visitor, *ibid.*, page 18).

### **Third Sunday in Ordinary Time**

First Reading – Jonah 3:1-5, 10

- After some persuasion, Jonah became God’s messenger to Nineveh. As Christian stewards, how difficult is it for us to accept God’s call to spread His message throughout the world?
- Have we experienced conversion like the people of Nineveh?

Psalm 25:4-9

- On our stewardship journey, we should trust God to guide us to justice and truth on our way to eternal life.

Second Reading – 1 Corinthians 7:29-31

- As Christian stewards, do we conduct ourselves in this world with full knowledge that we are preparing here for God’s heavenly kingdom?

Gospel – Mark 1:14-20

- In today’s Gospel, Jesus calls His first disciples and, without hesitation, they stop what they are doing and follow Him. Jesus calls us to follow Him, to be, as His disciples, faithful Christian stewards.

Stewardship Thought

There is a certain urgency in today’s Gospel as Jesus calls His first disciples — Andrew and Simon, James and John. Each one follows Jesus *immediately*, unhesitatingly abandoning nets and boats and father and fellow workers. To what is Jesus calling me — at *this* moment, in *these* circumstances? What will I need to abandon in order to follow Him? (Our Sunday Visitor, *ibid.*, page 18).

### **Fourth Sunday in Ordinary Time**

First Reading – Deuteronomy 18:15-20

- God used Moses, even though imperfect, as His prophet to the Israelites to speak in His name. We have our own imperfections, but as Christian stewards, do we allow God to use our gifts to further His kingdom here on earth?

Psalm 95:1-2, 6-9

- During Mass, do we participate in worshipping God by praising Him through prayer and song?

Second Reading – 1 Corinthians 7:32-35

- God calls each of us to a special vocation for the good of all. Are our hearts and minds open to that call?

Gospel – Mark 1:21-28

- Healing is important in Jesus’ ministry to reinforce His teaching. As Christian stewards, do we follow His teaching and are we humble enough to seek His healing in times of need?

### Stewardship Thought

Moses told the people, “*The Lord will raise up for you a prophet like me from among your own kinsmen.*” God still provides among His people the gifts and talents necessary to continue the work of His Church. What gifts are yours to share? See Deuteronomy 18:15 (Our Sunday Visitor, *ibid.*, page 19).

### **Presentation of the Lord (February 2)**

First Reading – Malachi 3:1-4

- As good stewards, do we cultivate God’s gifts so we can use our talents to the fullest to do good works in His name?

Psalm 24:7-10

- The Lord is the King of glory; let us welcome Him in our hearts.

Second Reading – Hebrews 2:14-18

- Jesus is faithful to the Father and was tested in His suffering. In our quest to be good Christian stewards, do we ask for His strength when we are tested?

Gospel – Luke 2:22-40

- Do we strive to make stewardship a way of life by longing for the Messiah like Simeon and Anna? Have we “consecrated” ourselves to the Lord?

### Stewardship Thought

When Mary and Joseph brought Jesus to the Temple, they offered a sacrificial gift “*in accord with the dictate in the law of the Lord.*” An offering of a specific size or kind is not “dictated” when we bring our gifts to the altar at Mass. Is my gift reflective of the blessings I have received? See Luke 2:24 (Our Sunday Visitor, *ibid.*, page 33).

### **Fifth Sunday in Ordinary Time**

First Reading – Job 7:1-4, 6-7

- In times of despair and hopelessness, we, as Christian stewards, know we can put our trust and faith in the Lord’s loving care.

Psalm 147:1-6

- The Lord is good and worthy of our praise. He heals and sustains us through His power and goodness.

Second Reading – 1 Corinthians 9:16-19, 22-23

- In the second reading, St. Paul is inspired to use his gift of speech to preach the Gospel, but does so humbly and as God’s servant to others. As Christian stewards, do we use our God-given gifts to spread God’s Word through our humble action?

Gospel – Mark 1:29-39

- The Gospels give us many accounts of the restorative power of Jesus’ ministry on earth. As good Christian stewards, we follow Jesus’ example and make daily prayer the vehicle of our stewardship journey.

### Stewardship Thought

Like St. Paul in the second reading, the good steward can say, “*I do all that I do for the sake of the Gospel in the hope of sharing in its blessings.*” See 1 Corinthians 9:23 (Our Sunday Visitor, *ibid.*, page 19).

### Sixth Sunday in Ordinary Time

First Reading – Leviticus 13:1-2, 44-46

- Who are the “lepers” of our day; do we treat them as outcasts, or are we loving and compassionate?

Psalm 32:1-2, 5, 11

- Christian stewards are comforted in the fact that they are loved and forgiven by a kind and merciful God.

Second Reading – 1 Corinthians 10:31-11:1

- True stewards, like St. Paul, imitate Christ by doing good for others for the glory of God.

Gospel – Mark 1:40-45

- Whether it is spiritual, psychological, emotional, or physical in nature, we, as Christian stewards, are never afraid to ask Jesus for the restorative healing in our lives offered by the Church through Her ordained ministers.

### Stewardship Thought

In today’s second reading, St. Paul urges the Corinthians to “*do all for the glory of God.*” If we follow that advice in everything we do, we cannot help but be good stewards! See 1 Corinthians 10:31 (Our Sunday Visitor, *ibid.*, page 19).

### Seventh Sunday in Ordinary Time

First Reading – Isaiah 43:18-19, 21-22, 24-25

- As Christian stewards, we believe that God forgives our offenses but can we, in a spirit of reconciliation, forgive those “*who trespass against us*”?

Psalm 41:2-5, 13-14

- God loves the poor. Do we, as Christian stewards, share our time, talent, and treasure with those who are less fortunate, and in need of our compassion?

Second Reading – 2 Corinthians 1:18-22

- God is always faithful and reliable in His gift of love for us. As Christian stewards, how steady and reliable are we in returning this gift to Him?

Gospel – Mark 2:1-12

- Due to the paralytic’s faith, Jesus heals and forgives him in today’s Gospel. Jesus also offers us the gift of forgiveness through our priests as representatives of Christ in the sacrament of Reconciliation. As Christian stewards, how often do we participant in this healing sacrament of forgiveness?



### Stewardship Thought

Forgiveness, too, is a gift from God. Freed from the paralysis of sin, the man in today's Gospel was able to stand and give witness to the power of God. How do I let sin cripple me? Am I a good steward of the gift of God's forgiveness? (Our Sunday Visitor, *ibid.*, page 19).

### **Eighth Sunday in Ordinary Time**

First Reading – Hosea 2:16-17, 21-22

- In this first reading, God makes a covenant of love and fidelity with His people, and asks us to respond as faithful stewards of His gifts.
- In marriage, God asks us as good Christian stewards to make that same covenant with our spouse.

Psalm 103:1-4, 8, 10, 12-13

- God offers us His abundant gifts of kindness and mercy. Do we, as Christian stewards, gratefully acknowledge these gifts from the Lord?

Second Reading – 2 Corinthians 3:1-6

- St. Paul does not take credit for his gift of preaching but acknowledges God through the Holy Spirit as the source of this gift. Do we, as disciples of Christ, acknowledge God as the source of our many gifts or do we consider ourselves “self-made” women and men?

Gospel – Mark 2:18-22

- Fasting was a common practice for the Jews of Jesus' day. Today, the Church asks us, if we are able, to fast during Lent in an effort to enhance our spiritual lives. As we continue our spiritual journey to make stewardship a way of life, why limit our fasting only to Lent?
- The way to follow Jesus does not depend on adherence to old rules but in our love.

### Stewardship Thought

St. Paul tells the Corinthians that they are living letters, “*known and read by all.*” What does the letter of *my* life reveal to those who read it? Can they tell by the way I live that I belong to Christ and that all I am and have is His? See 2 Corinthians 3:2 (Our Sunday Visitor, *ibid.*, page 19).

### **Ash Wednesday**

First Reading – Joel 2:12-18

- God is merciful, rich in kindness. Good stewards recognize our failings in appreciating God's gifts and beg His forgiveness and mercy.

Psalm 51:3-6, 12-14, 17

- As Christian stewards, we acknowledge our sinfulness and ask for reconciliation and restoration through God's grace in the Sacrament of Reconciliation.

Second Reading – 2 Corinthians 5:20-6:2

- Understanding stewardship calls us to be reconciled to God and receive His grace gratefully.
- Are we, as a parish, “ambassadors for Christ”?

Gospel – Matthew 6:1-6, 16-18

- Prayer, religious acts, and almsgiving are fundamental principles of Christian stewardship. We do these in gratitude to God, not to impress others.
- As good stewards, we give back to God our “first fruits.”

Stewardship Thought

In today’s Gospel, Jesus warns that our giving must be done quietly, without hoping for recognition or applause. But He also promises that God, Who sees even our most secret deeds, will reward those who fast, pray, and give alms (Our Sunday Visitor, *ibid.*, page 16).

### **First Sunday of Lent**

First Reading – Genesis 9:8-15

- In this first reading, God makes a new covenant with Noah and his family after they leave the ark, a chance for renewal in their lives. Daily, God gives us a new covenant, a chance for renewal in our lives. Do we, as Christian stewards, gratefully accept His offer and His gifts?

Psalm 25:4-9

- In mercy and compassion, God teaches and guides us on His way. Are we grateful for His gifts?

Second Reading – 1 Peter 3:18-22

- Jesus died for our sins, and by His resurrection, offers the gift of salvation to all who seek it. The waters of Noah’s day are a symbol of the salvation of our Baptism. As Christian stewards, we must take this gift seriously by forming a right conscience.

Gospel – Mark 1:12-15

- In today’s Gospel, Jesus in the desert is tempted by the devil. He exhorts us to reform our lives and believe His Good News. As stewards of our lives, are we humble enough in times of temptation caused by addictions and weaknesses to call on Jesus to help us avoid sin?

Stewardship Thought

The waters of Baptism make us part of the covenant in Christ. But the Bishops’ Pastoral Letter on stewardship reminds us that “*there is a fundamental obligation arising from the Sacrament of Baptism...that people place their gifts, their resources — their selves — at God’s service in and through the Church*” (Our Sunday Visitor, *ibid.*, page 16).

### **Second Sunday of Lent**

First Reading – Genesis 22:1-2, 9-13, 15-18

- In today’s first reading, Abraham is so devoted to God that he is willing to sacrifice his own son to the Lord. As Christian stewards, do we put that same trust in God in our lives?

Psalm 116:10, 15-19

- During times of hardship, rather than despair, we as good Christian stewards keep our faith and hope in the Lord and give thanks for His blessings.

Second Reading – Romans 8:31-34

- “*If God is for us, who can be against us*” says it all. As Christian stewards, what gratitude do we return to the Lord for this love?

Gospel – Mark 9:2-10

- In today’s Gospel, Peter, James, and John have a “mountain top” experience at Jesus’ Transfiguration. God asks them to “*Listen to Him.*” As Christian stewards, are we listening to Jesus and His teachings, or are we following our own will?

Stewardship Thought

Abraham was prepared to sacrifice his only son, Isaac. St. Paul reminds us that God Himself “*did not spare His own Son.*” Are my gifts to the Lord — of my resources, of my time, of myself — also sacrificial? See Romans 8:32 (Our Sunday Visitor, *ibid.*, page 16).

### Third Sunday of Lent

(Use Cycle A readings if your parish has RCIA catechumens and candidates.)

First Reading – Exodus 20:1-17

- The Ten Commandments are the foundation of living our life, and direction for loving God and our neighbor. As Christian stewards, reflecting on this reading is a good time to ask ourselves how seriously are we trying to follow God’s command.

Psalm 19:8-11

- Good stewards praise and thank God for His gift of wisdom and guidance handed down to us through His commandments.

Second Reading – 1 Corinthians 1:22-25

- Jesus’ crucifixion appears to the world as weakness, but faithful stewards recognize the saving power of God in Christ’s sacrifice.

Gospel – John 2:13-25

- In today’s Gospel, Jesus is justified in correcting the abuse occurring in the Temple. Are we courageous enough to work to correct the wrongs in our present day world?

Stewardship Thought

“*You shall not covet ...*” is perhaps a difficult commandment to keep in our consumer-oriented society. But as Christian stewards, we know that we are the recipients and caretakers of God’s many gifts. May this understanding that all is gift help us be less resentful of the gifts of others (Our Sunday Visitor, *ibid.*, page 16).

## **Fourth Sunday of Lent**

*(Use Cycle A readings if your parish has RCIA catechumens and candidates.)*

First Reading – 2 Chronicles 36:14-17, 19-23

- In today's first reading, the Jewish people and leaders of that day defiled the Lord's Temple and abandoned God's ways. God sent them prophets to encourage them to change their ways but they did not listen. What "false idols" in today's society do we as good Christian stewards need to avoid so that we are not lured away from our faith in God and His directives?

Psalm 137:1-6

- In a time of sorrow and loss, Christian stewards find peace, hope, and comfort in the Lord.

Second Reading – Ephesians 2:4-10

- Christian stewards offer praise and gratitude to God for faith and salvation through His Son, Jesus Christ — completely God's gifts, not of our doing.

Gospel – John 3:14-21

- God's love for us is immense. He so loved us that He gave His only Son for our eternal salvation. In praise and thanksgiving, what do we, as Christian stewards, return to the Lord for His tremendous gift?

Stewardship Thought

All that we have and all that we are comes from the Lord. "*We are truly his handiwork,*" says St. Paul in the second reading, "*created in Christ Jesus to lead a life of good deeds which God prepared for us in advance.*" See Ephesians 2:10 (Our Sunday Visitor, *ibid.*, page 17).

## **Fifth Sunday of Lent**

*(Use Cycle A readings if your parish has RCIA catechumens and candidates.)*

First Reading – Jeremiah 31:31-34

- In today's first reading, Jeremiah tells the ancient Israelites that God will "write" His law upon their hearts. As Christian stewards, how often do we ask for reconciliation for our failure to follow Christ in our lives?

Psalm 51:3-4, 12-15

- As Christian stewards, we not only seek God's gift of forgiveness of our sins but also that closeness with Him when we repent of those sins.

Second Reading – Hebrews 5:7-9

- As we seek to be Jesus' disciples, we must continue to pray, even when suffering.

Gospel – John 12:20-33

- True Christian stewardship requires that we lose ourselves to serve Jesus and others to gain eternal life with Him.



### Stewardship Thought

“If anyone would serve me,” says Jesus in today’s Gospel, “let him follow me; where I am, there will my servant be.” In what way is Jesus inviting me to follow Him? What service is He asking of me? See John 12:26 (Our Sunday Visitor, *ibid.*, page 17).

### **Palm Sunday of the Lord’s Passion**

Procession Gospel – Mark 11:1-10

- The people praised Jesus and blessed the reign of God. Yet, we know shortly thereafter many shouted for His death. As Christian stewards, is our faith in Jesus steadfast or only caught up in moments of fervor?

First Reading – Isaiah 50:4-7

- God gave Isaiah a well-trained tongue. What vocation has God called us to? Do we develop and cultivate our vocation through His grace and assistance?

Psalm 22:8-9, 17-20, 23-24

- Christ suffered and was humiliated for us. In times of our own suffering, He is with us to give peace and comfort.

Second Reading – Philippians 2:6-11

- Good stewards follow Jesus’ example of being the humble servant, for which God exalted Him.

Gospel – Mark 14:1-15:47

- In today’s Gospel, Jesus receives kindness, but then suffers betrayal and denial by His friends, false accusations, and humiliating death on a cross — all for our salvation. As Christian stewards, are we willing to gratefully take up our cross daily to become stronger disciples of Jesus?

### Stewardship Thought

Good stewards strive to conform their lives to that of Christ — emptying themselves of all pride and putting themselves at the service of others (Our Sunday Visitor, *ibid.*, page 17).

### **Holy Thursday: Mass of the Lord’s Supper**

First Reading – Exodus 12:1-8, 11-14

- In today’s first reading, the Lord instructs Moses and the Israelites to prepare a year-old lamb without blemish for the Passover sacrifice as an offering back to God of the “first fruits” of their livestock. The Passover meal is a foretelling of the Eucharist, Christ’s sacrifice for us. As Christian stewards, what sacrificial gifts of our time, talent, and treasure do we bring to the Eucharistic table?

Psalm 116:12-13, 15-18

- The psalmist, in response to his question, “*How shall I make a return to the Lord for all the good He has done for me?*” proclaims, “*I am your servant, the son of your handmaid ...*” As Christian stewards, we realize that we need to use our God-given skills and talents to serve others in love and gratitude.

Second Reading – 1 Corinthians 11:23-26

- In today’s second reading, St. Paul reminds the Corinthian Church how Jesus totally gives of Himself in the Eucharist. As practicing Christian stewards, it is the foundation of our faith that *we believe* in His *true presence* in this Most Holy Sacrifice — and not just as some symbolic gesture.

Gospel – John 13:1-15

- In today’s Gospel, our humble Lord washes the feet of His disciples, showing them an example of how they are to serve one another. We, too, as Christian stewards, strive to follow Jesus’ model of service in sharing our God-given talents with our neighbor, especially those less fortunate.

Stewardship Thought

On this awesome and holy night, we must reflect as grateful stewards how much Jesus loves us. He loves us so much that He instituted the Holy Eucharist to continue His life with us in forgiving our sins, healing our brokenness and strengthening our faith in Him. The very word, Eucharist, means “thanksgiving” and, for His sacrifice, we stand in awe and total gratitude.

**Good Friday of the Lord’s Passion**

First Reading – Isaiah 52:13-53:12

- Given the prophet Isaiah’s poetic description of a man’s suffering and humiliation, and ultimate justification and triumph, Christians take this reading to refer to Jesus’ suffering centuries later. As disciples of Jesus, we, too, know we need to take up our cross daily and follow Him.

Psalm 31:2, 6, 12-13, 15-17, 25

- We take refuge in the Lord, our strength in the face of the world’s humiliation and ridicule as we strive to be disciples of Christ by following His way.

Second Reading – Hebrews 4:14-16; 5:7-9

- Jesus, our high priest, died once for the sins of all humanity. He sympathizes with us for He, too, was tempted. Do we, as Christian stewards, gratefully acknowledge the magnitude of His sacrifice, which makes salvation open to all who seek to follow Him?



### Passion – John 18:1-19:42

- In John’s Passion account, when the soldiers and temple guard declare they are seeking “*Jesus the Nazorean*,” Jesus says, “*I AM*.” Even though they came to arrest Him, the power of His response caused them all to fall to the ground. As Christ’s disciples, we acknowledge His union with God the Father and Holy Spirit, and realize what awesome love He has for us.
- From the cross, Jesus presented His Mother to the world to be our model of Christian stewardship.

### Stewardship Thought

We sometimes wonder why this day is called “Good Friday” because it recalls Jesus’ trial and brutal scourging and death. Yet, as disciples of Christ, we know that without His suffering and death, we would not have His resurrection and promise of eternal life. By reflecting on this day, we, as Christian stewards, become truly grateful of Christ’s ultimate sacrifice for us.

### Easter Vigil

#### First Reading – Genesis 1:1-2:2

- The first and second chapters of the Book of Genesis tell how God created the universe, all creatures, and things. On the sixth day, He created man and woman in His likeness and image. As good stewards of the earth, it is our responsibility to take care of God’s creation. As children of God, we are truly thankful for His gift of life and it is our responsibility to protect all human life from conception to natural death. How seriously do we take these responsibilities?

#### Psalm 104:1-2, 5-6, 10, 12-14, 24, 35

- Good stewards rejoice in God’s creation and His power and wisdom in bringing it all forth.  
– or –

#### Psalm 33:4-7, 12-13, 20-22

- The Lord is the Creator of all things. As good stewards, we put our trust in Him and gratefully pray for His kindness to us.

#### Second Reading – Genesis 22:1-18

- In the second reading, God tests Abraham’s love for Him by asking him to sacrifice his only son, Isaac. Abraham does not question God’s directive. Out of Abraham’s fidelity to Him, God spared Isaac’s life and blessed Abraham abundantly. As Christian stewards, do we pray to find and do God’s will in our lives?

#### Psalm 16:5, 8-11

- We gratefully rejoice that God is always with us to guide us on His path to eternal life.

Third Reading – Exodus 14:15-15:1

- In the third reading, God delivers Moses and the ancient Israelite community from Pharaoh and his army by parting the Red Sea. By trusting in God to save them, Moses and his people escape through the parted sea while Pharaoh's army is destroyed when the rushing waters pour over them. What a powerful lesson to trust God in our times of trouble! As Christian stewards, how much do we trust in the Lord?

Psalm – Exodus 15:1-6, 17-18

- As Christian stewards, we gratefully praise the Lord for His power and steadfast protection of His people who strive to follow Him.

Fourth Reading – Isaiah 54:5-14

- The fourth reading takes place during the Babylonian captivity many centuries before Christ. Because of their grave sins against God, the ancient Israelites' homeland, including their sacred temple in Jerusalem, was destroyed, most of them taken captive, and sent to Babylon. Isaiah's imagery of an angry husband taking back his forsaken wife out of mercy and pity symbolizes God's mercy for His people, the captive Israelites, and for us when we turn away from God through sin. God, too, will forgive our sins through Jesus Christ if we, as His disciples, humble ourselves to seek reconciliation with Him.

Psalm 30:2, 4-6, 11-13

- As Christian stewards, we recognize God's great gift of forgiveness when we fail to be faithful to His commands.

Fifth Reading – Isaiah 55:1-11

- God promises His blessed comfort and nourishment to those who seek Him and do His will. God expects us as Christian stewards, to follow His Word and do His will throughout the world as He instructs.

Psalm – Isaiah 12:2-6

- Good stewards give thanks and praise to the Lord for giving us strength and courage to follow Him as His disciples.

Sixth Reading – Baruch 3:9-15, 32-4:4

- In the sixth reading, Wisdom is depicted as a woman who assists God in His works. She is one we should seek as we try to walk in the way of God in prudence and peace. Wisdom also is included as one of the seven Gifts of the Holy Spirit. In our daily prayer life as Christian stewards, do we ask the Holy Spirit for wisdom and guidance?

Psalm 19:8-11

- The law of the Lord is perfect, right, and trustworthy. The hearts of good stewards rejoice in the rewards of following His way.

Seventh Reading – Ezekiel 36:16-28

- In the seventh reading, the prophet Ezekiel condemns the Israelites for profaning God’s name and worshipping idols. Because of their sins, they are dispersed among the nations during the Babylonian exile. Yet God forgave them, just as He forgives us for His sake and His love for us. In return, He commands us to follow His law, even in the face of human laws that are contrary to His. As good Christian stewards, let us pray for strength in this modern world to be diligent in our obedience to God’s laws as taught by the Church.

Psalm 42:3, 5; 43:3-4

- Good stewards thirst to be with God forever. We give thanks in song and instrument in His house where we worship Him.

– or –

Psalm 51:12-15, 18-19

- God forgives us when we stray from His path. As good stewards, we recognize our failings and ask God to create clean hearts in us.

Epistle – Romans 6:3-11

- St. Paul tells us that through the gift of Baptism, we die to sin and also share in Christ’s death. But through Christ’s death we also share in His resurrection. We have life anew — a rebirth. Christian stewardship also requires a conversion of heart and mind — a new way of life. Where are we as Christian stewards on our stewardship journey?

Psalm 118:1-2, 16-17, 22-23

- The psalmist says it all for us: *“Give thanks to the Lord, for He is good, His mercy endures forever.”* We do well to thank and praise Him for His many gifts of grace.

Gospel – Mark 16:1-7

- The angel told Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome to tell Peter and Jesus’ disciples that Jesus had been raised up as He had told. As Christian stewards, do our lives witness our belief in the Good News of Christ’s resurrection?

Stewardship Thought

As our RCIA catechumens are Baptized, are Confirmed, and receive their First Holy Communion, may we, as good Christian stewards, welcome them with hospitable hearts into our faith communion. May we also be examples of true Christian stewardship to them by the way we share our time, talent, and treasure with our parish communion in the light of our risen Lord!

## **Easter Sunday**

First Reading – Acts of the Apostles 10:34, 37-43

- Jesus' ministry of good works and healing culminated in His triumphant resurrection from death on a cross. His gifts of forgiveness of sin, salvation, and membership in His Church are open to all who believe in Him.

Psalm 118:1-2, 16-17, 22-23

- As good stewards, we are thankful for our many blessings through the Lord's goodness, mercy, and power that endure forever.

Second Reading – Colossians 3:1-4

- We can seek what is above by sharing what we have here on earth. This is what Christian stewardship is all about. We realize that anything we have here on earth is not nearly as important as being with Christ. Once we realize that, sharing what we have is easy (Used with permission from the Archdiocese of St. Louis, [www.archstl.org/Stewardship](http://www.archstl.org/Stewardship), Stewardship Bulletin Inserts, December 2007 – March 2008).

– or –

Second Reading – 1 Corinthians 5:6-8

- Through the Eucharist, we, as the Christian community, are renewed in sincerity and truth.

Gospel – John 20:1-9

- Christ is risen! The disciples saw the wrappings in the tomb and believed in Christ. God gives us the greatest gift of all — salvation through His Son, Jesus, as we journey to be His disciples.

Stewardship Thought

Alleluia! Christ is risen and is victorious over sin and death! We are good stewards of our faith if, like St. Paul, we share this good news whenever and wherever we can (Our Sunday Visitor, *ibid.*, page 17).

## **Second Sunday of Easter (Divine Mercy)**

First Reading – Acts of the Apostles 4:32-35

- The early believers in Christ, in total stewardship, did not claim earthly possessions as their own. As Christian stewards, we likewise are called to share our blessings with the needy.

Psalm 118:2-4, 13-15, 22-24

- Good stewards, gratefully rejoice in the day the Lord has made and the strength and courage He gives us. His mercy and love is everlasting.

Second Reading – 1 John 5:1-6

- As good Christian stewards, we are born of God and love Him when we keep His commandments, which He promises are not burdensome. Thus strengthened in Him, we can conquer the world.



Gospel – John 20:19-31

- How many times in our stewardship journey do we find ourselves to be a “doubting Thomas” before we proclaim “*my Lord and my God*”?

Stewardship Thought

The Christian community described in Acts understood and practiced *total* stewardship. St. Paul reports that the believers did not claim anything as their own, but held everything in common, and distributed to each whatever was needed (Our Sunday Visitor, *ibid.*, page 17).

### **Third Sunday of Easter**

First Reading – Act of the Apostles 3:13-15, 17-19

- As Christian stewards, we are grateful that God our Father, through Jesus Christ, offers us the gift of eternal salvation if we repent of our sins, change our ways, and follow His commandments.

Psalm 4:2, 4, 7-9

- The Lord gives peace to those stewards who are faithful.

Second Reading – 1 John 2:1-5

- True Christian stewards understand that Jesus offered Himself for our sins and the sure way to follow Him is to keep His commandments.

Gospel – Luke 24:35-48

- Jesus encourages us to draw close to Him through the Scriptures. To be His disciples, let us ask Jesus to open our hearts and minds to His Word.

Stewardship Thought

The disciples in today’s Gospel came to know Jesus in the breaking of the bread. When we share what we have with those who are in need, we, too, will discover Jesus in our midst (Our Sunday Visitor, *ibid.*, page 17).

### **Fourth Sunday of Easter**

First Reading – Acts of the Apostles 4:8-12

- In today’s world, people seek “salvation” through various sources including worldliness, material wealth, influence, and power. As good Christian stewards, we know that our salvation comes *only* through Jesus.

Psalm 118: 1, 8-9, 21-23, 26, 29

- As Christian stewards, we know better than to trust in the world. Rather, we take our refuge in the Lord and put our trust in Him whose goodness and kindness endures forever.

Second Reading – 1 John 3:1-2

- God so loves us that He calls us to be His children. As Christian stewards, do we thank God for this great gift or do we take it for granted?

Gospel – John 10: 11-18

- As Christian stewards, we know we can put our faith and trust in Jesus, “*The Good Shepherd.*” What a great gift it is that He lays down His life for us.

Stewardship Thought

To be good stewards we must be good shepherds, willing to lay down our lives for those committed to our care, not mere hired hands who run off, “*leaving the sheep to be snatched and scattered by the wolf.*” See John 10:12 (Our Sunday Visitor, *ibid.*, page 18).

### **Fifth Sunday of Easter**

First Reading – Acts of the Apostles 9:26-31

- Do we, as Christian stewards, have the conversion of heart like St. Paul and his courage to live the Gospel even in the face of modern temptations?

Psalm 22:26-28, 30-32

- Good Christian stewards turn to the Lord to serve Him.

Second Reading – 1 John 3:18-24

- As Christian stewards, we must be mindful that our actions follow our words in accordance with God’s commands to believe in His Son, Jesus Christ, and to love one another.

Gospel – John 15:1-8

- To be good stewards, we are called by Christ to bear good fruit by living in Him. Do we live according to His call?

Stewardship Thought

In today’s Gospel, Jesus says that God is glorified when a disciple, grafted in Christ, produces abundantly and bears much fruit. The disciple must then be a good steward of that abundance (Our Sunday Visitor, *ibid.*, page 18).

### **Sixth Sunday of Easter**

First Reading – Acts of the Apostles 10:25-26, 34-35, 44-48

- In this first reading Peter says, “... *in every nation whoever fears Him and acts uprightly is acceptable to Him.*” In our parish, as good stewards, how welcoming are we to visitors and new members of our faith communion?

Psalm 98:1-4

- Christian stewards give thanks and praise to the Lord in song for revealing His kindness, faithfulness, and gift of salvation.



Second Reading – 1 John 4:7-10

- Good Christian stewards are thankful for God’s great gift of love, a love so strong that He sent His only Son as an offering for our sins.

Gospel – John 15:9-17

- In today’s Gospel, Jesus commands us to love one another as He loves us. As Christian stewards, do we go forth and devote our lives as His disciples?

Stewardship Thought

Jesus’ commandment is that His disciples love one another, even to the point of laying down their lives, if necessary. What gifts of myself — my skills and talents, my time and resources — will demonstrate my love for God’s people? (Our Sunday Visitor, *ibid.*, page 18).

### **The Ascension of the Lord**

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

First Reading – Acts of the Apostles 1:1-11

- Christian stewards gratefully accept God’s gift of the Holy Spirit as proclaimed by the risen Jesus.

Psalm 47:2-3, 6-9

- Good stewards sing praise to God in thanksgiving for His glory and rule in our lives.

Second Reading – Ephesians 1:17-23

- Stewards thank God for the gift of wisdom to see better the riches of His glory.
- We should always strive to be good stewards of the Church, the Body of Christ on earth.

Gospel – Mark 16:15-20

- As stewards of His great gifts, Jesus encourages us to go forth to proclaim His Good News. Do we use these gifts to encourage others to be His disciples?

Stewardship Thought

Jesus ascended into heaven, blessing His disciples and promising that they would soon receive the power of the Holy Spirit. We who have received that promised gift of the Spirit are now empowered to be His witnesses to the ends of the earth — to use our time and talents to spread the Good News of salvation (Our Sunday Visitor, *ibid.*, page 34).

### **Seventh Sunday of Easter**

*(When the Ascension is not celebrated on Sunday)*

First Reading – Acts of the Apostles 1:15-17, 20-26

- In today’s first reading, Peter and the other Apostles prayerfully choose a successor to Judas. Do we, like Matthias, answer God’s call to use our time, talent, and treasure to promote His kingdom on earth?

Psalm 103:1-2, 11-12, 19-20

- As good Christian stewards, we gratefully praise God for His many blessings bestowed upon us and His generous ruling in our lives.

Second Reading – 1 John 4:11-16

- God gives us His tremendous love in His Spirit. Do we, as Christian stewards, return our love to Him by loving one another as He commands?

Gospel – John 17:11-19

- In today's Gospel reading, Jesus prays for unity within the Church. He also sends us into the world but instructs us not to be of the world and its temptations.

Stewardship Thought

Jesus is the perfect steward — watching carefully over all who have been entrusted to Him by the Father and then sending them all out into the world in service. May I similarly protect and wisely use the gifts entrusted to me! (Our Sunday Visitor, *ibid.*, page 18).

### **Pentecost Sunday**

First Reading – Acts of the Apostles 2:1-11

- God filled the Apostles with the Holy Spirit to go forth to proclaim the Good News of Jesus. As good stewards, do we call upon the Holy Spirit to inspire our lives?

Psalm 104:1, 24, 29-31, 34

- Christian stewards strive to please God and marvel at His works, especially His tremendous gift of life in the Spirit.

Second Reading – 1 Corinthians 12:3-7, 12-13

- The Body of Christ, the Church, consists of many parts, all gifts from our loving God. Do we share our unique God-given gifts with our family, parish, and community?

Sequence

- We thank God for His gift of the Holy Spirit, Who gives us grace and the way to salvation.

Gospel – John 20:19-23

- Peace comes from the Father through the Holy Spirit and our Lord, Jesus Christ. Do we use our God-given talents to create peace among our brothers and sisters in the Lord?

Stewardship Thought

St. Paul reminds us today that all of our gifts have their source in the Holy Spirit and that those gifts are given “*for the common good.*” What gifts are mine to share? (Our Sunday Visitor, *ibid.*, page 18).



## Most Holy Trinity

First Reading – Deuteronomy 4:32-34, 39-40

- As Christian stewards, we know our God is strong and powerful, and yet generous to us when we strive, out of love and obedience, to keep His commandments.

Psalm 33:4-6, 9, 18-20, 22

- The Lord, creator of all, is kind to faithful stewards who put their trust in Him.

Second Reading – Romans 8:14-17

- As Christian stewards, do we have a close enough relationship with God to be considered His heirs?

Gospel – Matthew 28:16-20

- As Christian stewards, we believe that Christ is always with us, giving us strength to carry out His mission here on earth.

### Stewardship Thought

Today's second reading reminds us that we are adopted sons and daughters — the heirs — of God. We are good stewards of our inheritance when we share our faith and fulfill Our Lord's command to "*go ... and make disciples of all the nations.*" See Matthew 28:19 (Our Sunday Visitor, *ibid.*, page 33).

## Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ (*Corpus Christi*)

First Reading – Exodus 24:3-8

- In today's first reading, Moses and the Israelites make a covenant with God to follow His precepts and laws. In thanksgiving and reverence for God, do we, as Christian stewards, strive to do the same?

Psalm 116: 12-13, 15-18

- How can we return to the Lord for all He does for us? In gratitude, we, as Christian stewards, should offer our time, talent, and treasure back to Him.

Second Reading – Hebrews 9:11-15

- Christ sacrificed Himself for our redemption and gave us His Eucharistic gift. In thanksgiving, do we, as Christians stewards, show our reverence and respect for Christ's awesome gift, the Eucharist?

Gospel – Mark 14:12-16, 22-26

- At the Last Supper, Jesus instituted the Eucharist out of His great love for His disciples and for us today. Do we, as practicing Christian stewards, truly *believe* in the *real saving presence* of Jesus in the consecrated Eucharist, Whose presence we should gratefully adore?

### Stewardship Thought

The focus of today's feast is the total self-giving of Jesus. The Bishops' stewardship Pastoral reminds us that "*the glory and the boast of Christian stewards lie in mirroring, however poorly, the stewardship of Jesus Christ, who gave and still gives all He has and is, in order to be faithful to God's will and carry through to completion His redemptive stewardship of human beings and their world*" (Our Sunday Visitor, *ibid.*, page 33).

### **Ninth Sunday in Ordinary Time**

First Reading – Deuteronomy 5:12-15

- Good Christian stewards keep the Sabbath holy by attending weekend Mass regularly, partaking of the Eucharist, and, thus nourished, living out the Good News throughout the week.

Psalm 81:3-8, 10-11

- The Lord is good and worthy of praise and song for His strengthening us. Do we, as Christian stewards, recognize Him as our God or do we let other "false gods" lure us away from our faith?

Second Reading – 2 Corinthians 4:6-11

- Christian stewards realize that following Christ will be difficult at times, but like St. Paul, we are confident that Jesus will provide the needed strength to see us through those trials.

Gospel – Mark 2:23-3:6

- Do we merely follow the letter of seemingly rigid rules in our lives, or do we, as good Christian stewards, act out of mercy or kindness in the example of Jesus?

### Stewardship Thought

Today's first reading is a powerful reminder that time is also a gift of God for which we must be accountable. Six days to work, says Scripture, and a seventh for the Lord (Our Sunday Visitor, *ibid.*, page 19).

### **Tenth Sunday in Ordinary Time**

First Reading – Genesis 3:9-15

- As good Christian stewards, do we readily call on the Lord's strength in times of temptation by the devil? Do we take responsibility for our actions?

Psalm 130:1-8

- As we practice stewardship, do we show gratitude to the Lord for His gift of mercy and forgiveness?

Second Reading – 2 Corinthians 4:13-5:1

- Our gift of faith from the Lord strengthens us, that even though we will experience physical death, we are renewed in the hope of eternal life.



Gospel – Mark 3:20-35

- Are we striving as Christian stewards to do the will of God in communion with our fellow brothers and sisters in the Lord?

Stewardship Thought

Adam and Eve were banished from the Garden because of their disobedience. But Jesus says in today's Gospel that when we are obedient to God's will — when we use our gifts to serve one another — we are part of His family. "*Whoever does the will of God is brother and sister and mother to me*" (Our Sunday Visitor, *ibid.*, page 19).

### **Eleventh Sunday in Ordinary Time**

First Reading – Ezekiel 17:22-24

- Do we, as practicing Christian stewards, use our God-given gifts to reach out to others and bear good fruit for the kingdom of God?

Psalm 92:2-3, 13-16

- Good stewards, by gratefully recognizing the goodness of the Lord and praising Him, will flourish in Him.

Second Reading – 2 Corinthians 5:6-10

- St. Paul states in today's second reading, "... *we walk by faith ...*" Are we, as Christian stewards, building our faith by using our God-given gifts to do good or are we using those gifts for our own selfish gain?

Gospel – Mark 4:26-34

- Are we, as Christian disciples, allowing God's gift of faith — the mustard seed in today's Gospel parable — to grow larger in our lives? Are we practicing good stewardship by gratefully opening our hearts and minds to reach the full potential God has given us?

Stewardship Thought

Like the sower in today's Gospel, I scatter as seed my gifts of time, talent, and resources; and I trust that, by God's grace and in God's time, these small gifts of myself may grow and flourish and help to bring about the kingdom of God (Our Sunday Visitor, *ibid.*, page 20).

### **Twelfth Sunday in Ordinary Time**

First Reading – Job 38:1, 8-11

- In today's first reading, God speaks to Job amidst a storm. We know in our own lives that God can speak to us in very subtle ways. As Christian stewards, do we strive to make available quiet time to listen to Him?

Psalm 107:23-26, 28-31

- As Christian stewards, we can be gratefully confident that God will rescue us in times of great distress.

Second Reading – 2 Corinthians 5:14-17

- With Christ, a new covenant is created with us; now we live, not for ourselves, but in the example of Christ, Who gave us Himself. Do we, as Christian disciples, return our praise and thanksgiving to God for His great gift?

Gospel – Mark 4:35-41

- When the wind and storms hit us in daily life, do we, as Christian stewards, turn to the Lord in faith, or try to go at it alone?

Stewardship Thought

St. Paul reminds us in the second reading that Christ died “*so that those who live might live no longer for themselves.*” What we give to and do for others, we give to and do for Jesus! See 2 Corinthians 5:15 (Our Sunday Visitor, *ibid.*, page 20).

### **Thirteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time**

First Reading – Wisdom 1:13-15; 2:23-24

- God did not make death, only good things. Through sin, death entered the human condition. When we are called home to the Lord, will we be able to stand before Him and be accountable for our stewardship in this life?

Psalm 30:2, 4-6, 11-13

- Christian stewards give thanks and praise to the Lord for drawing us near Him. Like the psalmist, we rejoice with the dawn — the promise of eternal life with God.

Second Reading – 2 Corinthians 8:7, 9, 13-15

- In this second reading, St. Paul reminds us that, as followers of Christ, we are to support one another in our faith and in our needs.

Gospel – Mark 5:21-43

- Through their great faith, Jesus in today’s Gospel heals the woman with a hemorrhage and the synagogue official’s daughter. As Christian stewards, do we have the same faith in Jesus to heal us of our mental, spiritual, psychological, and physical afflictions?

Stewardship Thought

Today’s reading from St. Paul explains the “divine economy” of stewardship — “*The relief of others ought not to impoverish you; there should be a certain equality. Your plenty at the present time should supply their need so that their surplus may in turn one day supply your need.*” See 2 Corinthians 8:13-14 (Our Sunday Visitor, *ibid.*, page 20).

## **SS. Peter and Paul, Apostles (June 29)**

First Reading – Acts of the Apostles 12:1-11

- Good stewards know that God hears our prayers and gratefully trust that His answers will be according to His will and not our own.

Psalm 34:2-9

- Stewards take time to pray daily to thank God, to praise Him, and to call out to Him when in need.

Second Reading – 2 Timothy 4:6-8, 17-18

- At the end of our lives, will we, as Christian stewards, be able to show that through the strength the Lord gives us we did use our time, talent, and treasure to further God's kingdom here on earth?

Gospel – Matthew 16:13-19

- Peter recognized Jesus as his Lord and God, and was not afraid to say so. He accepted Christ's call to be the "Rock" on which the Church is built, to carry on Christ's ministry to the world. As Christ's disciples, do we accept His call to our vocation in life?

Stewardship Thought

Saints Peter and Paul worked tirelessly to spread the Gospel. Not all can be apostles, but we, too, must be good stewards of *our* vocations, using the gifts we have been given in the service of God's kingdom (Our Sunday Visitor, *ibid.*, page 34).

## **Fourteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time**

First Reading – Ezekiel 2:2-5

- As Christian stewards, do we witness by our lives in this modern day, that we are following Christ's message to us?

Psalm 123:1-4

- As the Lord's disciples, we need to stay strong in Him when we are insulted and challenged for our faith and beliefs.

Second Reading – 2 Corinthians 12:7-10

- St. Paul reminds us that in our weaknesses, Christ makes us strong through His gift of grace.

Gospel – Mark 6:1-6

- In today's Gospel, Jesus does not perform any large miracles in His hometown because of their lack of faith. As Christian stewards, is our faith strong enough to bring about even small miracles in our lives?

### Stewardship Thought

During this time, we celebrate the independence of our country. We would do well to echo the psalmist, saying, “*Our eyes are fixed on the Lord, pleading for His mercy.*” May we always recognize and use the gifts of freedom and abundance He has showered upon us. See Psalm 123 (Our Sunday Visitor, *ibid.*, page 20).

### **Fifteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time**

First Reading – Amos 7:12-15

- As followers of Christ, are we fulfilling our vocation? Do we nurture and use our God-given gifts of talent and skills to do so?

Psalm 85:9-14

- Christian stewards understand that in following the Lord, in His kindness and truth, He promises the benefits of justice and salvation.

Second Reading – Ephesians 1:3-14

- As Christian stewards, we understand God’s great gift in choosing us to be holy and filled with love for Him and others. How are we doing in answering God’s call?

Gospel – Mark 6:7-13

- The apostles answered Jesus’ call and in His name went out to use His gifts to heal the sick and drive out demons. Are we using God’s gifts to us faithfully to build up His kingdom?

### Stewardship Thought

Today’s readings are about being chosen and sent. The prophet Amos was chosen by the Lord and sent to use his talents for the people of God. The Gospel recounts the story of the sending of the Twelve. In the second reading, St. Paul reminds us that we, too, are chosen. For what have I been chosen? To whom have I been sent? (Our Sunday Visitor, *ibid.*, page 20).

### **Sixteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time**

First Reading – Jeremiah 23:1-6

- In today’s first reading, Jeremiah warns about evil rulers who mislead the people. Today the same is true. Christian stewards need to educate themselves on significant political issues to be good citizens who faithfully follow Catholic teaching.

Psalm 23:1-6

- Good stewardship parishes warmly welcome all who come, regardless of circumstances or position.
- As Christian stewards, do we offer a warm welcome to guests in our homes and are we generous in sharing our blessings with them?

Second Reading – Ephesians 2:13-18

- Are we practicing good Christian stewardship by praying for Christ's gift of peace to reconcile and heal any divisions in our lives, in our families, in the workplace, in our community and parish?

Gospel – Mark 6:30-34

- In our hectic world, do we, as Christian stewards, allow for quiet time in our lives to refresh our spirits and draw closer to Christ by listening to His teachings?

Stewardship Thought

In today's Gospel, Jesus had planned to slip away from the crowds for a few moments of peace and a little rest. When He saw the people gathered, however, He put His needs aside to meet the needs of others. As good stewards, we are called to do the same (Our Sunday Visitor, *ibid.*, page 20).

**Seventeenth Sunday in Ordinary Time**

First Reading – 2 Kings 4:42-44

- Good stewardship entails giving our "first fruits" back to God in thanksgiving for His many blessings to us.

Psalm 145:10-11, 15-18

- The Lord is faithful to us. As Christian stewards, do all our works give Him thanks and praise?

Second Reading – Ephesians 4:1-6

- In this second reading, St. Paul reminds us to be worthy of the Lord's calling us to virtue and to preserve community unity as one Body in Christ and in one Spirit. As Christian stewards, are we using our time, talent, and treasure to promote unity in our parish communion?

Gospel – John 6:1-15

- In today's Gospel, Jesus feeds the physical needs of the multitude by multiplying five barley loaves and two fish. His actions are similar with His disciples at the Last Supper by instituting the Eucharist which continues to nourish the Church. As true Christian stewards, do we recognize His real presence in the Eucharist and do we exhibit reverence and respect in gratitude for this tremendous gift He made available to us?

Stewardship Thought

"*The hand of the Lord feeds us,*" says the psalmist; "*he answers all our needs.*" Both Elisha's servant in the first reading and the disciples in the Gospel story who witnessed the feeding of the five thousand saw this happen and knew it to be true. See Psalm 145 (Our Sunday Visitor, *ibid.*, page 20).

## **Eighteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time**

First Reading – Exodus 16:2-4, 12-15

- Because of the grumbling of the ancient Israelites, God rained down manna for bread and quail for meat to feed them in the wilderness. Food is a gift from God. In our country of plenty, how grateful are we, as Christian stewards, for the abundant blessings God gives us?

Psalm 78:3-4, 23-25, 54

- The goodness of the Lord is proclaimed throughout the ages. As stewards, do we show “an attitude of gratitude” for the Lord’s many blessings bestowed upon us?

Second Reading – Ephesians 4:17, 20-24

- In today’s second reading, St. Paul encourages us to get rid of the old, sinful self, and put on a new self by learning more about Christ through His teaching. In our stewardship journey are we drawing closer to Christ through prayer and study of Scripture?

Gospel – John 6:24-35

- Jesus says, “*I am the bread of life ...*” Good stewards thank God daily for our blessings of food but are most thankful for the spiritual food offered by Jesus through the Eucharist — the foundation and summit of our faith.

Stewardship Thought

The crowd in today’s Gospel demanded a sign from Jesus. May our faithful stewardship be a sign to others that we, like the Ephesians in the second reading, have laid aside our former way of life and acquired a “fresh, spiritual way of thinking” in Christ (Our Sunday Visitor, *ibid.*, page 20).

## **Transfiguration of the Lord (August 6)**

First Reading – Daniel 7:9-10, 13-14

- Good stewards recognize God as Lord and King of our lives. Do we use our God-given talents to serve Him?

Psalm 97:1-2, 5-6, 9

- The Lord is King and the Most High. Do we gratefully praise Him?

Second Reading – 2 Peter 1:16-19

- Peter witnessed God telling the world during Jesus’ Transfiguration that He is “well pleased” with His Son. Would He also be pleased with how we are using our time, talent and treasure to embrace His kingdom?

Gospel – Mark 9:2-10

- As we productively use God’s gifts to further His work, we are confident that in our faithful service as His disciples, we, too, can have a “mountain top” experience with our Lord.



### Stewardship Thought

In the Gospel today, Peter yearns to *do* something to make concrete the Transfiguration he had witnessed. But to be a good steward of this spiritual gift, he was instructed to *be still*, to *listen* to Jesus, and to *wait* for His direction. Good advice for us, too! (Our Sunday Visitor, *ibid.*, page 34).

### Nineteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time

First Reading – 1 Kings 19:4-8

- As we practice stewardship in the way we live, we can be confident that when we put our faith in God, He will not only provide for our physical needs but also provide spiritual nourishment for our journey.

Psalm 34:2-9

- The Lord answers stewards who put their total trust in Him. We should praise and glorify Him at all times for His goodness to us.

Second Reading – Ephesians 4:30-5:2

- In today's second reading, St. Paul tells us that we should forgive one another as God forgives us, we should love one another as Christ loves us. As Christian stewards, are we following these instructions?

Gospel – John 6:41-51

- In today's Gospel, Jesus says, "*I am the living bread that came down from heaven; whoever eats this bread will live forever ...*" As Christ's disciples, we build our faith by joining with our parish communion in partaking of the Eucharist. Does the quest for material wealth distract us from attending weekend Mass and receiving Holy Communion?

### Stewardship Thought

The gifts of God that the angel brought to Elijah — food, water, rest, and encouragement — were given, not for his own good alone, but to strengthen him for service. How am I using my gifts to serve others? (Our Sunday Visitor, *ibid.*, page 21).

### Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary (August 15)

First Reading – Revelation 11:19; 12:1-6, 10

- The woman described in the passages from Revelation, can be seen as a symbol of Mary, the model Christian steward, or of the Church, the Bride of Christ. Either way, as we practice Christian stewardship and draw closer to our Lord, Jesus Christ, the symbolism promises that we are given the gift of grace to do good and resist evil.

Psalm 45:10-12, 16

- As stewards, do we follow Mary's example and honor Christ as Messiah and King or are we preoccupied with the "false" gods in our culture?

Second Reading – 1 Corinthians 15:20-27

- Christ’s message to us is one of unity; His kingdom is above all nations. At the “*resurrection of the dead*,” will we be able to show Christ that we truly used our God-given talents and shared our “first fruits” to further His kingdom on earth?

Gospel – Luke 1:39-56

- Mary’s canticle is a beautiful expression of her humbleness and praise to God in calling her to be the Mother of Jesus. As Christian stewards, do we follow her example of trusting God completely and always?

Stewardship Thought

*“After Jesus, it is the Blessed Virgin Mary who, by her example, most perfectly teaches the meaning of discipleship and stewardship ... She was called and gifted by God; she responded generously, creatively and prudently; she understood her divinely assigned role as ‘handmaid’ in terms of service and fidelity”* (United States Conference of Catholic Bishops [USCCB], *Stewardship: A Disciple’s Response*, Tenth Anniversary Edition, 2002, page 41).

**Twentieth Sunday in Ordinary Time**

First Reading – Proverbs 9:1-6

- As we draw closer to God through our stewardship journey, we are called to welcome others to join in that journey through generous use of our God-given gifts of time, talent, and treasure.

Psalm 34:2-7

- Good Christian stewards bless and praise the Lord, knowing that those who seek Him do not lack for any good thing.

Second Reading – Ephesians 5:15-20

- In gratitude, Christian stewards, filled with the Spirit, sing hymns of praise to God for every blessing in the name of our Lord, Jesus Christ, and strive to avoid evil.

Gospel – John 6:51-58

- Jesus proclaims in today’s Gospel, “... *whoever eats this bread will live forever.*” As Christian stewards, what an invitation we have for intimacy with Christ through His Body and Blood, and our way to eternal life with Him by partaking in His gift of the Eucharist!

Stewardship Thought

Even though we are told that if we seek the Lord, we shall not want, in the second reading St. Paul reminds us that, thus blessed by the Lord, the good steward should “*give thanks to God the Father always and for everything in the name of our Lord, Jesus Christ.*” See Ephesians 5:20 (Our Sunday Visitor, *ibid.*, page 21).

## Twenty-First Sunday in Ordinary Time

First Reading – Joshua 24:1-2, 15-18

- In today's first reading Joshua says, "*As for me and my household, we will serve the Lord.*" In our stewardship journey, do we proclaim that same allegiance to God's way for our family?

Psalm 34:2-3, 16-21

- The Lord hears the cry of the poor. As disciples of Christ, we give witness of our stewardship by sharing our God-given gifts with them.

Second Reading – Ephesians 5:21-32

- Good Christian stewards acknowledge that the institution of marriage between a man and a woman is a true gift from God. Husbands and wives must be devoted to each other as Christ is devoted to the Church.

Gospel – John 6:60-69

- Jesus' teaching on the Eucharist troubled some of His followers, and they lost their faith. Do we, as Christian disciples, understand that Christ's Body and Blood is the foundation of our faith in the Lord?

### Stewardship Thought

In today's first reading, Joshua challenges the people to decide whom they will serve. Recalling God's faithfulness to them and to their ancestors, the people declare, "*We also will serve the Lord, for He is our God.*" May we, too, be mindful of God's gifts to us and renew our commitment to serve Him with grateful hearts (Our Sunday Visitor, *ibid.*, page 21).

## Twenty-Second Sunday in Ordinary Time

First Reading – Deuteronomy 4:1-2, 6-8

- Christian stewards strive to follow close to God by observing His commandments, which are right and just.

Psalm 15:2-5

- God promises that Christian stewards who make every effort to obey His laws out of love and respect will find His peace.

Second Reading – James 1:17-18, 21-22, 27

- In our second reading, St. James proclaims, "*... every perfect gift is from above ...*" Understanding this is the foundation of Christian stewardship — God calls us to share His gifts with others, especially the poor.

Gospel – Mark 7:1-8, 14-15, 21-23

- Jesus states in today's Gospel, "*This people honors me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me ...*" Stewardship is a conversion of both heart and mind — a new way of life. Where are we on this journey to be close to Christ?

### Stewardship Thought

“Every worthwhile gift, every genuine benefit, comes from above,” says St. James in the second reading. But, he reminds us, true worship of God involves *using* those good gifts to benefit the less fortunate. Good stewardship is not optional; it is the hallmark of our faith! See James 1:17 (Our Sunday Visitor, *ibid.*, page 21).

### Twenty-Third Sunday in Ordinary Time

First Reading – Isaiah 35:4-7

- In today’s first reading, the prophet Isaiah proclaims, “*Say to those whose hearts are frightened: Be strong, fear not!*” These are comforting words to us as Christian stewards in an uncertain world.

Psalm 146:7-10

- As Christian stewards, we find our strength and protection in the Lord and are thankful for God’s unending mercy.
- The Lord is champion of the poor and oppressed.

Second Reading – James 2:1-5

- Discrimination and prejudice are evils in our society. To be Christian disciples and good stewards, we must understand the kingdom of God is open to ALL who love Him.

Gospel – Mark 7:31-37

- When health issues occur, do we, as Christian stewards, seek God’s gift of healing through grateful prayer?

### Stewardship Thought

The good steward must not show favoritism. The rich may have many material gifts to share, but St. James reminds us in the second reading that God has chosen the world’s poor to be rich in faith and inheritors of God’s kingdom (Our Sunday Visitor, *ibid.*, page 21).

### Twenty-Fourth Sunday in Ordinary Time

First Reading – Isaiah 50:4-9

- In life, suffering is expected when we become God’s followers. As Christian disciples, we can stand confident through the world’s ridicule for we know the Lord is with us.

Psalm 116:1-6, 8-9

- As Christian stewards, we take comfort in the mercy and love of our God in His dealings with us.

Second Reading – James 2:14-18

- Christian stewards know that faith in Christ prompts good works — they go hand in hand.



Gospel – Mark 8:27-35

- Jesus proclaims in today’s Gospel, “*If a man wishes to come after me, he must deny himself, take up his cross, and follow me.*” To be Christian stewards, we must lose our own lives for the sake of discipleship in Christ.

Stewardship Thought

In the second reading today, St. James has harsh words for those who do not put their faith into action. May we be such good stewards of God’s gifts to us that we can never be accused of having “*faith that does nothing in practice.*” See James 2:17 (Our Sunday Visitor, *ibid.*, page 21).

### **The Exaltation of the Holy Cross (September 14)**

First Reading – Numbers 21:4-9

- God is merciful and forgives us when we repent of our sins. We are healed through reconciliation with Him. What modern day idols tempt us to turn away from God?

Psalm 78:1-2, 34-38

- God forgives the contrite when we sin against Him. As Christian stewards, what spirit of forgiveness do we show when we are wronged by others?

Second Reading – Philippians 2:6-11

- Christ gives us the model for placing the needs of others above our individual interests.

Gospel – John 3:13-17

- God’s love gave us His only Son as a gift to all people and, through Christ’s death and resurrection, eternal life for all who believe in Him. As Christian stewards are we grateful for this great gift?

Stewardship Thought

Even though the Lord led them out of Egypt and provided for their every need, the people in today’s first reading were complaining and ungrateful. Does my stewardship of God’s gifts show that I know from whom they came and am grateful? (Our Sunday Visitor, *ibid.*, page 34).

### **Twenty-Fifth Sunday in Ordinary Time**

First Reading – Wisdom 2:12, 17-20

- As stewards, Christ strengthens us as we strive to follow God’s law, even when the evil one tempts us to break His commandments.

Psalm 54:3-8

- As Christian stewards, we pray in confidence that God will give us strength in times of confrontation with evil.

Second Reading – James 3:16-4:3

- As disciples of Christ, we seek true wisdom, justice, and peace to help us avoid conflict with others and to do God’s will and not our own.

Gospel – Mark 9:30-37

- In today's Gospel, Jesus tells the apostles, "*If anyone wishes to be first, he shall be the last of all and the servant of all.*" In this statement, Jesus sums up how, as Christian stewards, we are to serve others.

Stewardship Thought

Today's second reading warns that a heart consumed with avarice and envy leads to jealousy, strife, conflicts, and disputes. A giving heart, in contrast, can sing instead with the psalmist, "*Freely will I offer you sacrifice; I will praise your name, O Lord, for its goodness.*" See Psalm 54 (Our Sunday Visitor, *ibid.*, page 21).

**Twenty-Sixth Sunday in Ordinary Time**

First Reading – Numbers 11:25-29

- Like prophets of old, our Church leaders today are inspired by the Holy Spirit and are considered modern day prophets. As practicing Christian stewards, do we heed their words?

Psalm 19:8, 10, 12-14

- As disciples of Christ, we are refreshed and find freedom in our lives when we follow God's laws which are just and trustworthy.

Second Reading – James 5:1-6

- In today's second reading, St. James admonishes those who seek wealth and build their wealth by cheating others. As Christian stewards, what do we seek?

Gospel – Mark 9:38-43, 45, 47-48

- In today's Gospel, Jesus warns us to make whatever corrections we need in our lives to assure our chances of getting into heaven. As we continue our stewardship journey, this is a good time to examine our lives to determine how we can deepen our relationship with God.

Stewardship Thought

St. James warns in today's second reading that those who hoard their wealth and live only for themselves will be condemned. But in the Gospel, Jesus assures us that all who give of themselves for His sake will be rewarded (Our Sunday Visitor, *ibid.*, page 22).

## Twenty-Seventh Sunday in Ordinary Time

First Reading – Genesis 2:18-24

- In today's first reading, God states, "*That is why a man leaves his father and mother and clings to his wife, and the two of them become one flesh.*" God makes clear that the Sacrament of Matrimony, a beautiful gift from God, is between one man and one woman.

Psalm 128:1-6

- Happy is the family — father, mother, and children — that follows the way of the Lord.

Second Reading – Hebrews 2:9-11

- St. Paul, in this second reading, reminds us that Jesus is, "... *leader to their salvation ...*" And through His suffering, He consecrates us as His brothers and sisters in the Lord.

Gospel – Mark 10:2-16

- Jesus proclaims marriage as a sacred life-long commitment between a man and a woman as husband and wife. As Christ's disciples, do we have "child-like faith" in the Lord?

Stewardship Thought

The phrase in today's psalm, "*May you see your children's children,*" is really a prayer for a long life. The good steward knows that *every* day is a gift from God, to be lived with joy and thanksgiving. "*May the Lord bless us all the days of our lives!*" See Psalm 128 (Our Sunday Visitor, *ibid.*, page 22).

## Twenty-Eighth Sunday in Ordinary Time

First Reading – Wisdom 7:7-11

- As Christian stewards, we should pray for wisdom because through this gift comes a life of grace which enlightens us to follow the path to the Holy Spirit, and not worldly desires.

Psalm 90:12-17

- The psalmist says, "*Prosper the work of our hands!*" As Christian stewards and servants of the Lord, we pray in joy and gladness to do His will and use His gifts to further His kingdom here on earth.

Second Reading – Hebrews 4:12-13

- In this second reading, we learn the power of the Word of God. We also are reminded that as Christian stewards, we will be called to account of our stewardship.

Gospel – Mark 10:17-30

- Jesus teaches us that to be His disciples we must give up things of this world and follow Him. He promises His disciples peaceful abundance and warns of persecution.

### Stewardship Thought

In today's Gospel, Jesus asks the rich young man to give away all that he has in order to have treasure in heaven. But he is unable to free himself from his possessions, and so he goes sadly away. Does what *I* own keep *me* from following Jesus? (Our Sunday Visitor, *ibid.*, page 22).

### Twenty-Ninth Sunday in Ordinary Time

First Reading – Isaiah 53:10-11

- We know as Christian stewards that to be disciples of Christ, we must turn over our very lives to Him, and endure suffering for His sake.

Psalm 33:4-5, 18-20, 22

- The Lord is just and right and kind. Our faith in Him is our shield during difficult times.

Second Reading – Hebrews 4:14-16

- Let us, as good stewards, pray to the Lord for strength in times of temptation, for we know that Jesus, too, was tempted throughout His life here on earth, but never sinned.

Gospel – Mark 10:35-45

- In today's Gospel, Jesus says to His apostles, "*Whoever wants to rank first, must serve the needs of all.*" Let us keep this verse in mind as we serve others with the time, talent, and treasure God has given us to further His kingdom.

### Stewardship Thought

Good stewards must not argue about who is the most important. Today's Gospel says clearly that those who aspire to greatness must humbly serve the needs of all. Even Jesus came not to be served, but to serve (Our Sunday Visitor, *ibid.*, page 22).

### Thirtieth Sunday in Ordinary Time

First Reading – Jeremiah 31:7-9

- Let us be mindful of our responsibility as good Christian stewards to console, comfort, and pray for those in our parish communion who are experiencing difficult times.

Psalm 126:1-6

- As grateful stewards of the land, we are glad and rejoice in the Lord's abundant harvest of great things for us.

Second Reading – Hebrews 5:1-6

- As Christian stewards, we are reminded that God calls each of us to a personal vocation using our unique God-given gifts. Let us continue to pray for holy men and women to answer their special call to the priesthood or religious life.

Gospel – Mark 10:46-52

- In today's Gospel, Jesus heals the blind man Bartimaeus because of his faith. Do we, as Christian stewards, have enough faith so that Jesus can heal us?



### Stewardship Thought

Today's psalm says, "*The Lord has done great things for us; we are filled with joy.*" Good stewards demonstrate by their living and giving that they understand God as the Source of all they are and have. See Psalm 126 (Our Sunday Visitor, *ibid.*, page 22).

### All Saints (November 1)

First Reading – Revelation 7:2-4, 9-14

- Good stewards understand salvation comes from Christ as symbolized by the white garment in the Sacrament of Baptism, which washes away the stain of sin.
- Christian stewards strive to build a strong relationship with God through prayer, meditation and adoration.

Psalm – 24:1-6

- Do we strive to be Christ's faithful stewards with sinless hands and clean hearts like the saints?

Second Reading – 1 John 3:1-3

- God's great love calls us to be His children. Do we use our time and talents to lead virtuous lives, so by our example, the world will know we are Christ's disciples?

Gospel – Matthew 5:1-12

- To be good Christian stewards, we must strive to live the Beatitudes. As faithful stewards, we profess to follow Christ's teaching to lose our lives completely in His service of others.

### Stewardship Thought

Today's psalm makes clear that we and everything we think we own actually belongs to God instead: "*The Lord's are the earth and its fullness, the world and those who live in it.*" We are *stewards*, not owners, of our own lives and all we possess! See Psalm 24 (Our Sunday Visitor, *ibid.*, pages 34-35).

### The Commemoration of all the Faithful Departed (All Souls – November 2)

First Reading – Wisdom 3:1-9

- God gives peace in death to good stewards who strive to live lives faithful to God.
- He gives us grace and peace and is merciful to us always.

– or –

First Reading – Daniel 12:1-3

- We, as faithful stewards strive to live just and holy lives pleasing to God, Who will judge us on our last day according to our actions.

Psalm 23:1-6

- Just as the Lord, our Shepherd, refreshes our souls, as Christian stewards we should embrace a spirit of hospitality to others in our home and our parish.

Second Reading – Romans 5:5-11

- As Christian stewards, we put our hope in God Who does not disappoint, but instead pours out His love for us, especially through His Son, Jesus Christ, Who has redeemed us even though we are sinners.

– or –

Romans 6:3-9

- Christian stewards believe that through our Baptism we receive grace to live with Christ. He died for our sins, and, if we die to sin, we trust that we will unite with Him in our resurrection.

Gospel – John 6:37-40

- Are we striving as Christian stewards to follow God’s will and, by truly believing in His Son, be raised with Him on the last day?

– or –

Gospel – John 11:17-27

- Jesus states, *“I am the resurrection and the life; whoever believes in Me, even if he dies, will live ...”* All of us, even those who believe in our Lord, will experience physical death, but our souls will live forever. These are comforting words for us, who, as disciples of Christ, strive to follow His commandments, and do his will.

Stewardship Thought

On the Feast of All Souls, we pray for those who have gone before us and stand in judgment before God. May we share with one another the treasure of love’s memory, and console one another with the assurance of resurrection in Christ Jesus (Our Sunday Visitor, *ibid.*, page 35).

**Thirty-First Sunday in Ordinary Time**

First Reading – Deuteronomy 6:2-6

- In today’s first reading, Moses encourages the ancient Israelites to follow God’s commandments and give the Lord their total love. Our Church leaders today profess the same message. As Christian stewards, are we listening?

Psalm 18:2-4, 47, 51

- In a spirit of gratitude, we as good Christian stewards praise God for being our rock and salvation.

Second Reading – Hebrews 7:23-28

- Jesus, our High Priest, accepted His call to do His Father’s will, even dying on a cross for our salvation. As good Christian stewards, may we continue to pray that more men and women, with Jesus as their example, answer God’s call to the priesthood and religious life, and that we may answer God’s call to our own vocation.

Gospel – Mark 12:28-34

- In today’s Gospel, Jesus teaches us that to be His disciples we must love God with our whole being, and *“love your neighbor as yourself.”* We know how difficult this directive can be. Let us pray to the Lord for patience with our neighbor in our communities, our parishes, and the world.



### Stewardship Thought

What percentage does God ask of me as a good steward? *All* of my heart, *all* of my soul, *all* of my mind, and *all* of my strength! (Our Sunday Visitor, *ibid.*, page 22).

### Thirty-Second Sunday in Ordinary Time

First Reading – 1 Kings 17:10-16

- In today's first reading, the widow's small act of kindness to Elijah does not go unnoticed by the Lord. Trusting in God, and looking for nothing in return, the widow is abundantly blessed. Are we, as Christian stewards, humble enough to gratefully acknowledge that all of our gifts and blessings come from the Lord?

Psalm 146:7-10

- The Lord commands us as good stewards to provide food for the hungry and justice for the oppressed. How well are we using our time, talent, and treasure to follow His command?

Second Reading – Hebrews 9:24-28

- Christ died for our sins and paved the way for salvation for those who seek it. As Christian stewards, we understand that we will be accountable for our stewardship of God's gifts. What praise and gratitude do we return to the Lord for this great gift of hope for eternal life with Christ?

Gospel – Mark 12:38-44

- In today's Gospel, Jesus praises the poor widow's giving to the temple treasury because her sacrifice was great. However, He admonished the wealthy who gave of their surplus, which was no sacrifice. In our own sacrificial giving, where are we in this story? Are we giving to the weekly offertory what is left of our funds, or are we giving back to God the "first fruits" of our labors?

### Stewardship Thought

Both widows in today's readings gave all they had to the work of the Lord, one using all her remaining food to feed Elijah and the other offering her two copper coins to the temple treasury. Faithful stewards give all that is asked and trust the Lord to be faithful to His promises (Our Sunday Visitor, *ibid.*, page 22).

### The Dedication of the Lateran Basilica in Rome (November 9)

First Reading – Ezekiel 47:1-2, 8-9, 12

- Good stewards are grateful for water as the source of life on earth and a gift from God, symbolizing His grace flowing throughout the world. In gratitude for the precious gift of God's creation, we must be good stewards of the environment.

Psalm 46:2-3, 5-6, 8-9

- In troubled times, Christian stewards trust in God's strength and guidance; He is always with us.

– or –

Psalm 84:3-6, 8-11

- As Christian stewards, we yearn to live in the house of God.



Second Reading – 1 Corinthians 3:9-11, 16-17

- As Christian stewards, do we strive to build the Church with Jesus as both the master-builder and the foundation of our life?

Gospel – John 2:13-22

- As good stewards, do we deal honestly with others in our financial matters, understanding that every material possession is God's gift to us?
- Just as Jesus described His body as a temple, are we good stewards of our own bodily health?

Stewardship Thought

As we pray today for increase of spiritual gifts, we are reminded by the Bishops' Pastoral Letter on stewardship that good stewardship of the Church "*means cherishing and fostering the gifts of all, while using one's own gifts to serve the community of faith*" (Our Sunday Visitor, *ibid.*, page 34).

### **Thirty-Third Sunday in Ordinary Time**

First Reading – Daniel 12:1-3

- In today's first reading, Daniel's prophecies about the end times can apply to the end of our own lives here on earth. If our lives ended today, would the Lord find we have been wise and just in how we used our time, our God-given gifts and our treasure to do His work here on earth?

Psalm 16:5, 8-11

- If we trust in the Lord as faithful stewards, we know He will provide for all of our needs.

Second Reading – Hebrews 10:11-14, 18

- Jesus made the perfect offering for our sins. As Christian stewards, do we show gratitude to God for His Son's sacrifice for our salvation?

Gospel – Mark 13:24-32

- Jesus warns us to be prepared, for we know not the day or hour of the end times, nor our own death. If the second coming of Christ happened today, would He find us grounded in our faith and practicing the fundamentals of stewardship in a way that He could call us one of "His chosen?"

Stewardship Thought

The readings today speak of the end of the world and the coming of the kingdom. The Bishops' Pastoral on stewardship says clearly that "*that 'life to come' is in continuity with this present life through the human goods, the worthy human purposes, which people foster now.*" May our good stewardship help us to be numbered among the chosen on the last day! (Our Sunday Visitor, *ibid.*, page 23).

## Christ the King

First Reading – Daniel 7:13-14

- In today's first reading, the prophet Daniel says, "... *all peoples, nations, and languages serve Him.*" As Christian stewards, are we making every effort to do God's will and serve Him by using our time, God-given gifts and financial resources to do His work here on earth?

Psalm 93:1-2, 5

- The psalmist says, "*The Lord is king ...*" Do we as practicing stewards give Him grateful praise and glory for His abundant grace bestowed upon us?

Second Reading – Revelation 1:5-8

- In today's second reading, the Lord God says, "*I am the Alpha and the Omega ...*" The Lord is the beginning and the end — the almighty. As Christian stewards, we believe that through Christ's sacrifice for our sins, God has called us to serve Him.

Gospel – John 18:33-37

- As we struggle to become closer disciples of Jesus through our stewardship efforts, how many times, like Pilate, do we turn our back on the Lord and seek worldly gain? Yet, in His infinite mercy, He forgives us and calls us back to a closer relationship with Him in His kingdom.

Stewardship Thought

- Today's second reading reminds us that the sacrifice of Christ frees us from sin and makes us a royal nation of priests *in the service* of God. How am I using my gifts to serve God and others? (Our Sunday Visitor, *ibid.*, page 23).