

## **VII Sunday in Ordinary Time – Cycle C**

Praised be Jesus Christ. Now and forever! It has been almost 8 months since I have started my ministry as a priest here at Holy Trinity, and since then I have heard the word “stewardship,” or that we are a “stewardship parish,” probably by now a million times. And according to what I have been told, since 2004, you have officially implemented “stewardship” as a way of living, as a model for your parish. So, for almost 15 years you have been officially a “stewardship parish,” thanks be to God. But, today, I want to remind you, that actually you have been “stewards,” following this way of life, even before Holy Trinity existed.

I have heard all those stories going back to when Msgr. Kidder and Loretta, our parish secretary, used to work from a rented office in Cambridge Road and then in the business park in El Dorado Hills. And look at what you have now: a big and beautiful church, an Education Center, a Social Center, a whole complex of very useful facilities, located in a wonderful place, where you can feel closer to heaven. This – what you see today – is not the work of a single person. This represents who you are, and the love that you have for God and one another. This is who you are as “stewards,” men and woman, young and old, who came together more than 25 years ago, with your own gifts of time, talent, and treasure, and you made Holy Trinity Parish a reality.

So, this reason I say that you have been “stewards,” a “stewardship parish”, since the very beginning. And the most important thing to recognize is that it has worked, and today we can see the fruits. And this has worked not because a brilliant mind from Harvard or Yale developed or put this way of living together. It has worked because “stewardship” is part of God’s plan. It is part of being convinced that all what we are, that all what we have comes from God, that he is

the Creator, the Provider of all, and that we are his “stewards.” It is part of being a disciple of Christ. It is part of making that personal decision to live through, in, and with Christ.

Remember also those days when you were at Silva Valley Elementary and you were setting up and putting away chairs for Mass, greeting and inviting more people to come to Mass, singing in the choir, and supporting already financially what it was going to be this beautiful place of worship. Since then you were “stewards,” already using and putting your gifts of time, talent, and treasure to the service of God and his people.

Then Holy Trinity Parish became real. We have a beautiful campus. We are more than 3300 families registered, who come together every week to worship God and keep building the community—a community of brothers and sisters who strive to follow Jesus Christ faithfully—by serving one another. More than 250 children are receiving Catholic education in our school ministry. And more than other 61 active different ministries, together with all the parish staff, work every day to continue building God’s Kingdom, serving one another and those brothers and sister in need. All this is real. All this is beyond expectations.

However, that doesn’t mean that the work is done or finished. In fact, more than ever, at this most critical time, our commitment as “stewards” is very much needed. In a society that is making every single effort to push God out of human conscience, people need to hear about Jesus, people need to know Jesus. There are many brothers and sisters, who for one reason or another, walked away from God and His Church; also, there are those who have never heard clearly the message of Jesus; and of course, there are all of us who strive day and night to develop a closer relationship with him. We too need to hear about Jesus. We too need to meet Jesus personally.

Yes. The need is great – but great and abundant are also the gifts, all the graces and blessings that we have received from God. Just think about it.

And it is true. You can tell me, “Father Jesus, don’t you think I haven’t done enough? I have been here since there was no Holy Trinity Parish. I think I have done alot, and still I am part of three or four different ministries.” I would answer, “So true my son or daughter, and we are so grateful for what you have done. And I promise you God will reward you for all your good work. But it is also true that you still have many gifts, so much to offer: your precious time, your many talents, and your material blessings.

It is also true, you can tell me, “Father Jesus, don’t you see me? I am brought to Mass in a wheelchair, or I don’t have time because of work and family responsibilities. I am just having a rough time right now. I was fired from my job.” You name it. All these are real situations in life. But still, you have so much to offer in one way or another. And this is precisely what Jesus reminds us in today’s Gospel: *Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful. Give, and gifts will be given to you; a good measure, packed together, shaken down, and overflowing, will be poured into your lap. For the measure with which you measure will in return be measured out to you.*”

In fact, when you think that you can do no more, I want to invite you to think on this story of a missionary in Congo Africa. After his conversion, he would come every day to help the medical personnel in one of the hospitals of the Missionaries of Charity, and in addition to that, he would read the Gospel to the patients. But one day the man experienced trouble while reading. So, one of the doctors at he hospital checked the man’s eyes and discovered that he was going blind rapidly. The next day the missionary didn’t show up at the hospital. And someone reported

he had gone off into the hills alone. Weeks later, a boy led the doctor to where the man was. At once, the doctor questioned him about his decision of going away. But the missionary explained to him that, since he was going blind, in the near future he wasn't going to be able to assist the medical personnel, nor read the Bible to patients. So, he decided to work hard in memorizing the Gospel while he could still see. *"Soon I'll be back at the hospital, Doctor,"* he said, *"and I'll continue my work teaching Jesus message to patients, not by reading, but by repeating what I have memorized."*

Once again. There is still so much to do. And yes, yes, yes, whatever your situation in life is, you still have so much to offer. Because knowing Christ personally, having him in your life is having everything. So, as we approach to our "Stewardship Sunday," I invite you to think and pray seriously about your commitment renewal.

As Mother Theresa of Calcutta used to say, *"What I do, is the work of God. I am just a little pencil in God's hands who is sending a love letter to the world. He does the thinking. He does the writing. He does everything and sometimes it is really hard because I am broken pencil and He has to sharpen it a little more."* Brothers and sisters, if you want, you can be that little pencil in the hand of God. Will you allow him to write his story through you?

Praise be Jesus Christ. Now and forever!