

These reflections are provided to help you focus your thoughts for your homily to incorporate a more pronounced stewardship message.

— *Stewardship Reflections by Catholic Stewardship Consultants*

Stewardship Homily Reflections

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[OCTOBER 31, 2021 — THIRTY-FIRST SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME](#)

[DT 6:2-6; PS 18:2-3, 3-4, 47, 51; HEB 7:23-28; MK 12:28B-34](#)

Today’s Gospel reading brings us to the very essence of a stewardship way of life, as Jesus responds to a question posed to Him by one of the scribes: “Which is the first of all the commandments?” His answer is a beautiful and concise description of a Christian steward’s life: “The first [commandment] is this.... You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength. The second is this: You shall love your neighbor as yourself.”

Let’s consider these “greatest commandments” as they relate to three aspects of a Christian steward’s daily life — the use of our time, of our talents and of our material treasure.

The use of time in the context of stewardship refers primarily to our relationship with the Lord — in other words, our prayer life. Since time is a gift to me from God, I show my love for Him and my gratitude for this gift by giving Him the best portion of my time. My best time for prayer may be first thing in the morning before the noise and hectic pace of the day begin. It may be a few quiet moments at my desk during my lunch break. Or it could be in the evening with my spouse after the children have gone to bed. Of course, it is vital to talk to God throughout the day, but if I really want to love Him with

all my heart, soul, mind, and strength, shouldn't I make time for God "first" on my agenda each day? Not as an afterthought, but as a time I have intentionally chosen to spend only with Him.

The use of talents in the context of stewardship refers to the way I offer the abilities, skills, and interests the Lord has given me for the good of those around me. While our loving Father gives us these things for our own enjoyment, He also intends for us to use them to help others. Doing so is a practical way to "love my neighbor as myself." At the same time, it is also a way to love the Lord with all that I am and have since He has told us that whatever we do for others we are also doing for Him.

The use of material gifts in the context of stewardship likewise demonstrates both love of God and of neighbor. When I trustingly offer a sacrificial gift to God through the offertory collection, I am showing Him in a very tangible way that He comes before all else in my life. At the same time, my gift is also a gift to my neighbor and a way to show my love for others through needed material assistance for charitable works, religious formation of parish children and adults, and the many other ways that our parish family works together to worship and serve the Lord and our community.

NOVEMBER 7, 2021 — THIRTY-SECOND SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

[1 KGS 17:10-16; PS 146:7-10; HEB 9:24-28; MK 12:38-44](#)

Today's First Reading from the First Book of Kings, as well as the Gospel passage from Mark, both center on the actions of two poor widows. The Gospel passage is often called the story of the "Widow's Mite." But taken together, perhaps a more fitting title of the stories of these two ladies would be, "The Mighty Widows."

In our First Reading, the prophet Elijah encounters a widow during a terrible famine. She is preparing to make one last meal for herself and her son before their supply of food runs out. Elijah, acting as God's messenger, tells her not to be afraid and asks her to give him something to eat before preparing a meal for herself and her son. In an extraordinary act of trust — and heroic hospitality — she agrees to Elijah's request! Again, speaking as God's own messenger, Elijah assures her of God's special provision for her, telling her that her "jar of flour shall not go empty, nor the jug of oil run dry, until the day when the Lord sends rain upon the earth." Sure enough, the widow and her son were able to eat for a year, just as God promised.

In the Gospel, Jesus observes the crowd as they make their offerings to the synagogue treasury. He sees the wealthy people putting in large sums, while a poor widow contributes only two small coins. Seizing on this teachable moment, Jesus calls His disciples to Himself and tells them that according to His calculations, it is the widow who has made the most pleasing offering. Unlike the rich, who gave a portion of their surplus, the widow gave all she had, “her whole livelihood.”

In the eyes of the world, particularly in Biblical times where there was no life insurance or Social Security, these widows were weak and dependent on others to take care of them. They each found themselves in desperate situations — one during a famine with a child to care for, and the other clearly impoverished. Yet each demonstrated strength and generosity that distinguished them from those around them. From where did this strength come?

It came from knowing who they are, and Whose they are. These women must have known that their security would not come from a good life insurance policy or connections to someone with a hidden storehouse of flour.

No, their security came from knowing they were daughters of the Most High God and from putting their faith in Him. They did not need to panic amid natural disaster or cling desperately to their menial resources. Their faith in God set them free to trust Him when all seemed hopeless. Their faith kept them detached from material possessions. Their faith allowed them to be brave and generous, to think of others despite their own trials.

These women saw themselves as stewards, not owners, of the resources God gave them, regardless of how much or how little they had. And acting as stewards made them gracious, generous, and mighty indeed.

NOVEMBER 14, 2021 — THIRTY-THIRD SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

DN 12:1-3; PS 16: 5, 8-11; HEB 10:11-14, 18; MK 13:24-32

Today’s readings are in stark contrast to the joy of the holiday season that is fast approaching, warning us instead of dark times ahead and our inevitable judgment day.

The first reading from the prophet Daniel describes a time “unsurpassed in distress since nations began” and warns that “many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake; some shall live forever, and others shall be an everlasting horror and disgrace.” The second reading, from Hebrews, speaks of Christ who “waits until his enemies are made his footstool.”

However, when we firmly establish for ourselves as individuals — as a family and as a parish that we will give to God the first and best portion of our Time, Talent, and Treasure — the warnings we read in the Scriptures today should be no cause for alarm. In fact, we can view these words as encouragement — “Keep Calm and Steward On,” no matter what comes our way.

One of the blessings of a stewardship way of life is that in challenging times, whether in our homes or workplaces or even our beloved Church itself, we can take great comfort in knowing we have a concrete plan to keep our priorities in proper order. And, when we put God first in all aspects of our lives, we will experience the peace that He gives that surpasses all understanding.

NOVEMBER 14, 2021 — THIRTY-THIRD SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

DN 12:1-3; PS 16: 5, 8-11; HEB 10:11-14, 18; MK 13:24-32

We are approaching the start of the holiday season. Thanksgiving is less than two weeks away and if the advertisers are to be believed, the Christmas shopping season is already in full swing.

Today’s readings stand in stark contrast to all this worldly merry-making, warning us of dark times ahead and our inevitable judgment day. How should a modern-day disciple and steward respond to these seeming contradictions? Keep this question in mind as we take a look at the Word of God presented to us this week.

The First Reading, from Daniel, describes a time “unsurpassed in distress since nations began” and warns that “many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake; some shall live forever, and others shall be an everlasting horror and disgrace.”

The Second Reading, from Hebrews, speaks of Christ who “waits until his enemies are made his footstool.”

Even the Gospel Acclamation is ominous: “Be vigilant at all times and pray that you have the strength to stand before the Son of Man.”

In the Gospel passage, from Mark, Jesus describes a time of tribulation after which “the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light, and the stars will be falling from the sky, and the powers in the heavens will be shaken. And then they will see the Son of Man coming in the clouds with great power and glory.”

Sobering messages indeed. It’s enough to make you lose your appetite for that second piece of pumpkin pie.

But for a committed disciple of Christ, these messages are simply a healthy (and vivid!) reminder of why our priority is God Himself.

For when we have firmly established for ourselves as individuals, as a family, and as a parish that we will give to God the first and best portion of our Time, Talent, and Treasure, the warnings we read in the Scriptures today need not cause us alarm. In fact, we can receive them as an encouragement to “Keep Calm and Steward On,” no matter what comes our way.

One of the blessings of a stewardship way of life is this: In challenging times, whether in our homes or workplaces, or even our beloved Church itself, we can take great comfort in knowing we have a concrete plan to keep our priorities in proper order. And when we put God first in all aspects of our lives, we will experience the peace that He gives that surpasses all understanding.