

Pastor's Column

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Gratitude—the Heart of Discipleship

We have been called by name. Our God, through Jesus, the Son, has embraced us, and desires to enter into friendship with us, a friendship that is a deep, intimate relationship that lasts for eternity:

I no longer call you slaves, because a slave does not know what his master is doing. I have called you friends, because I have told you everything I have heard from my Father. It was not you who chose me, but I chose you and appointed you to go and bear fruit that will remain, so that whatever you ask the Father in my name he may give you. This I command you: love one another.

—John 16:15-17

Once we hear and respond to this call to friendship with our God, our lives are totally different. We see the world in a different light.

We realize that we have come from God and we are making our way back to God. We are pilgrims on a journey of faith and life.

As sojourners on this pilgrimage, we become aware that our friendship with God is also a friendship with other sojourners. We awaken to the reality that we are all brothers and sisters on this planet Earth, in this Universe. We awaken to the reality that all we are and have is pure gift from God! We own and possess nothing. We are simply called to take care of what God has given us while we live, and, hopefully, at the end of our earthly journey give back to God a world that is just a bit better because of our time here.

We become stewards and our charge is stewardship. The Merriam-Webster Dictionary defines stewardship as “the careful and responsible management of something entrusted to one’s care.”

The month of November is a month of gratitude, a month of thanksgiving in which we, in a special way, give thanks to God for all that we are and have.

Here at St. Thomas More Parish we celebrate our month of Catholic Stewardship by focusing on our discipleship and our gratitude which is the heart of discipleship.

We challenge ourselves, once again, to review our gifts of time, talent, and treasure which we render on behalf of God’s Reign. What is the quality and quantity of our gifts? Do they adequately represent and symbolize our gratitude? Are they an adequate

representation of our faith and our friendship with God and as disciples of Jesus who continue his mission and ministry for this time and this place?

In the next three weekends, we will focus on these questions and recommit ourselves to be faithful Catholic Stewards.

As we move forward with the building of our Permanent Church and our Parish Offices, our stewardship is more important than ever! To be successful in this very challenging project that awaits us, we will need every member of our Parish Family to be “onboard.” Your gifts of time, talent, and treasure will be needed more than ever.

We begin our Catholic Stewardship Awareness Month with my homilies focused on Stewardship this weekend, and a special “Towers of Faith” reception which will be held on Sunday, November 7, at the Rectory.

The “Towers of Faith” are those who have remembered our Parish in their estate planning. Their generosity in remembering us at the end of their lives is so significant to our Parish financial health in the present and the future. We presently have 40 households and 11 deceased members (Our Towers of Faith are listed on page 5 of today’s bulletin.)

If you are not a “Tower of Faith,” please consider becoming one as you plan the gifting of your treasure in your estate arrangements.

Next weekend, Dr. Brad Yates and Dr. Susan Lagasse-Yates and their son, Timothy, and daughter, Sydney, will give a faith witness about the meaning of stewardship in their lives.

On the third weekend of November, there will be a Ministry Fair which will highlight those areas of Parish life that are in greater need of your gifts of time, talent, and treasure.

Allow this month to deepen our commitment as Disciples of Jesus, and may our gratitude be the heart of that discipleship!

I close with this anonymous quote: “*The Dead Sea is the dead sea because it continually receives and never gives.*”

Fr. Mike