

30th Sunday Ordinary Time
October 24, 2010
Fr. Tom Elliott

Participating in the Mission

Sirach 35:12-14, 16-18
Psalm 34
2 Timothy 4:6-8, 16-18
Luke 18:9-14

We are so blessed at Christ the King Catholic Church to have so many people who actively support the mission and ministry of our parish and schools! Whether your support is primarily through your prayer, attending Mass, volunteering, or donating money—thank you!!!

I realize that the last few years have been particularly difficult for many of our families due to the economic crisis in our country. The unemployment rate is high, homes are in foreclosure, some people have taken pay cuts, and it doesn't look like it is going to turn around quickly. Many people would say that this is a horrible time for us to celebrate our 2nd Annual Stewardship Month. However, stewardship must never be reduced to simply giving money. When we reduce stewardship to simply *giving*, then it becomes another burden, like another bill to pay. **The thing that makes us good stewards is not primarily our giving of time, talent, and treasure, but rather, our participation in the mission of Jesus Christ.**

God has a plan for each of us. Our lives are neither accidental nor meaningless. God created us to be unique images of Christ so that we could evangelize the world and spread the Good News. Stewardship is, ultimately, our cooperation with God's plan and mission for our lives. It is a love, trust, and generosity that lead every aspect of our lives. When we choose to make stewardship a lifestyle, a *mission for Christ*, then we bring God glory; in fact, we find that giving our time, talent, and treasure fills us with love, meaning, joy and peace.

The mission that Jesus invites all of His disciples to accomplish is one of paradox. It doesn't make logical sense that, by spending our lives, we would actually gain the most important things in life—love, purpose, joy, and peace. Jesus explained it in the Gospel of Luke, saying—

If anyone wishes to come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me. For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will save it. What profit is there for one to gain the whole world yet lose or forfeit himself?

-Luke 9:23-25

It's a paradox—a very important paradox! To be good stewards, then, means embracing the cross of Christ, and therefore, His mission. It means living, not for ourselves, but for others. It means *spending* ourselves for the sake of others, just as Christ did for all of us.

The reason why so many churches today are celebrating annual stewardship months is because we have, by and large, lost touch with the mission of Jesus Christ. Our culture works hard to convince us that the most important thing in life is “saving our lives,” hoarding our time, talent and money. The mission of Jesus Christ tells us, however, that life is not about hoarding, but rather, about love expressed in our giving our lives for others.

Our Annual Stewardship Month is a time for us to remember the mission of Jesus Christ, and to make that mission our own through the sacrifice of our time in prayer, our talent in service, and our financial resources. During our closing song at Mass, we are going to walk in procession behind the cross and candles over to the parish center for our ministry fair. It will be a wonderful time for us to eat some great food and visit with one another. Most importantly, it will be an opportunity to find out more about the various ministries that we can get involved in at Christ the King parish, as well as in our community.

Next weekend, during Mass, we will have a chance to sign up for the ministries that we feel the Lord is calling us to serve in. We will also have an opportunity to make a commitment of our time in personal prayer and our tithing. I encourage us to continue to pray about how God desires for us to be His stewards, participating in the mission and ministry of Jesus Christ!

SUGGESTED PRAYER EXERCISE:

- ✚ Read Mark 1:32-39. Based on this Scripture story, how would you describe Jesus' purpose and mission? The disciples apparently misunderstood Jesus' mission in this story. However, Jesus was not distracted by their misunderstanding, but rather, spent time in prayer and then moved forward with living the Father's will. Who are the people who occasionally distract you from your purpose and mission? How has prayer helped you to stay focused?