

All of Us Are Stewards

Wis. 2: 12, 17-20; Ps. 54; Ja. 3: 16-4:3; Mk. 9: 30-37

We live in such a competitive world. We play sports and try our best to win. In business, we do everything we can to beat the competition. We are constantly struggling, striving, grasping. St. James says: 'You want something and do not have it; so you commit murder. And you covet something and cannot obtain it; so you engage in disputes and conflicts.'

Jesus' disciples were no different. They also were competitive. As they were leaving the mountain where Jesus was transfigured, they argued among themselves as to who was the greatest. Imagine the surprise and disappointment when Jesus stopped and told them: 'Whoever wants to be first must be last of all and servant of all.' Jesus' teaching was in total contrast to human thinking. It did not involve getting to the top.

Cardinal Collins has designated this Sunday as Stewardship Sunday noting that whatever we have accumulated in this world, whether it be wealth, talent, power or position, is a gift from God. We are not owners of these gifts. We are stewards of them. A portion of Cardinal Collins' homily for this Sunday states this:

A steward is not the master. A steward is the servant, entrusted with the goods of the master. And the master - the Lord God - has entrusted us with time, talent and treasure. He has entrusted us, above all, with time in this world. All of the various abilities we have are not ours. Even our very life itself, we don't own it. We are simply entrusted with it. We are stewards of our life. We are stewards of the gifts we have received. We are stewards of the time we have.

And it is not an infinite time on this earth. We have to get ready to meet the Master at the end of our life. He is not going to ask us: How much have you gotten for yourself? How successful were you? How close did you get to the top of this earthly world? Rather He is going to ask us: Have you loved the Lord your God with your heart and mind and soul? Have you loved your neighbour as yourself? Have you been a good steward of the time I entrusted to you or have you tried to cling to it all for yourself?

We need to have within our hearts the spirit of stewardship. We are servants, only servants. We are entrusted by the Lord with many treasures, and He asks us to make them fruitful in this life. We should be saying: How can I make use, fruitfully, creatively, of the gifts the Lord has given to me?

If we do that, forgetful of me, self, ego, and, instead, thinking of the other person or the whole community and how I can serve, then our own communities will be serene.

That is our mission, to be faithful disciples of the Lord, thinking of others in imitation of Jesus and to recognize God as first, my neighbour as second, myself as third. In that sense, to be a faithful steward. A steward of the gifts that God has given to me, unique in my own personal life in the service of God, for the love of God and the love of neighbour.

In that way, at the end of life - that will come at a time we do not know and sooner than we think - we can look forward to coming face-to-face with the Lord and to hear those words: 'Well done, good and faithful servant. Enter into the joy of your Master.'