

Ken,

*After reading the gospel, I will begin by introducing you as the new person on the staff assisting with stewardship in the parish. I will also mention that last week we began a month long reflection on stewardship as we reflected on the power of the Father's love to allow Jesus to embrace the cross and die for us. The love of the Father can also transform our own lives and make us stewards, helping to build up His kingdom.*

As Fr. Don mentioned, I am Kenneth Troupe, a member of this community for over 35 years. Through Fr. Don, the Lord has invited me to speak with you about stewardship this morning.

In today's first reading through the prophet Isaiah, we hear God telling, 'My thoughts are not our thoughts and my ways are not our ways.' In fact, God says "As high as the heavens are above the earth, so are my ways above your ways and my thoughts above your thoughts."

Today's gospel from Matthew brings home to us just HOW DIFFERENT God's ways are. Jesus tells us the parable about the generosity of the landowner who goes out and hires men to work in his vineyard. At the end of the day, he pays the man working one hour the same full day's wage as the man who has worked all day. God's generosity is unmatched. God's gifts to us are overwhelming and gracious. God pours out his abundance on all of us.

Just think for a moment:

Who created you and gave you life as the crown jewel and pinnacle of all creation?

Who supplies you with the air you are breathing?

Who blessed you to live in one of the richest countries in the world?

Who loves us so much that he sent his only Son to show us how to have life and have it to the full?

God's way is a generous outpouring of love, a self-giving river of graciousness, a light in our darkness.

And we, as his followers, are called to enter into his way of living and loving, his graciousness and self-giving way of life. We are called to form a community in the Spirit, witnessing to his way of living.

But we live in a world that so often is quite the opposite. We are overwhelmed with people who are very self-absorbed, self-indulgent, and not caring for our brothers and sisters. *I remember an incident at my job with the City of Detroit, there was a division manager who took a report I wrote on "How to use benchmarking as a way to improve purchasing processes & procedures" and he took full credit for writing it and remove my name as the writer of this document.* We live in a me-generation. Often in our homes we get self-absorbed in our televisions or video games or cell phones, and often ignore our own family members. Neighbors do not know each other anymore. City and suburb do not want to work together for the good of the metro community. Every day we see an example as expressed in the local newspapers & TV News of communities not wanting to work with each other. *A prime example is the situation with the City of Detroit Water & Sewerage Commission and County Executives in neighboring communities not wanting to work in conjunction with the City of Detroit for the betterment of all people in our tri county areas. In short, it is all about them & not what is best for all of us.*

But we, you and I, as followers of Christ, are called to act differently. We, like the landowner in today's gospel, are called not to hoard our gifts and talents, but following the example of our Lord, put our gifts and talents to the service of our community and world.

We call that unique and caring way of life “Stewardship”. Last week Fr. Don gave out these little books on Stewardship (hold up the book) and invited us to spend six minutes reading and reflecting each day. One of the reflections talk about what the word “stewardship” means. It means “to manage someone else’s house”. The word “steward” or “stewardship” is mentioned 87 times in the New Testament. In his letters, St. Paul speaks of himself as a “steward” of the gospel.

In our modern society we often think in terms of what we own. I own my house; I own my car, the clothes on my back, etc. But God’s way of looking at possessions is very different from our way of looking at possessions. The landowner in the gospel today acts as a steward of what God has graciously given him. He realizes that his vineyard is a gift from God. He has been entrusted with the vineyard to help bring about God’s kingdom of justice and peace. He sees men out of work. He generously shares with others in need.

When I came into this world, I did not own anything. And when I leave this world, I will leave without anything. The “things” I have are given to me by God. God has called me to be a good steward of his gifts.

Here at Corpus Christi, as disciples of Jesus Christ, we are trying to follow his way of living and form a community of stewardship. We are attempting to use the gifts of our time, talent and treasure with which God has gifted us to build up his Kingdom. We are developing a community of love where we can invite our family and friends and neighbors to experience God’s way of living.

In reflection, of how I became a Christian Steward. I can remember because it started simply enough. While at mass at Immaculate Heart of Mary, Sister Stephanie came to me and asked me to do something for her (who can turn Sister down). The next thing I knew I was elected to Immaculate Heart of Mary Parish Council. As steward there, I worked on the transition team to unify both St. Gerard & Immaculate Heart of Mary Parishes which has become to date the greatest & most wonderful Corpus Christi Catholic Community as we now know. I am saying these things not to brag on myself but to give you an example of how God has guided me as a Christian Steward to serve him & our church.

Look around you, have you notice that are parish is blessed with an international flavor of families. We have families from 6 of the 7 continents of this world. Each one of these families, if asked has a reason why they joined our parish, but more importantly why they decided to stay at Corpus Christi instead of going somewhere else.

I am here today to challenge you... and myself... to look deeply at the kind of life we are living and to commit ourselves even more fully to a life of stewardship modeled by Jesus Christ.

Finally, thank you for allowing me, a humble parishioner, to share with you my thoughts and ask each of you to pray on how share your love, time & talents.

As a way of inviting you and your household to commit yourselves to a life of Christian stewardship, I will now invite Wenonah Handshu to come forth and explain a simple idea that we can enter more deeply in to the life of Christ

through sharing our time, talent and treasure to help build up the Kingdom of God.