

**Stewardship Bulletin Reflections**  
**Winter 2012\***  
**Thoughts on Giving**  
**December 18, 2011 – March 25, 2012**

**December 18, 2011**

**4<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Advent**

*“Do not be afraid, Mary.” - Luke 1:30*

It can be a little scary to do as God asks – to give Him the first fruits of our time, talent and treasure. The comforting words the angel spoke to Mary can comfort us, too, when we strive to be good Christian stewards – *“Do not be afraid.”*

**December 25, 2011**

**Nativity of Our Lord**

*“She wrapped him in swaddling clothes and laid him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn.” - Luke 2:7*

Where is Jesus in your life? Have you made room for Him or is He still in the manger wrapped in rags? If we are living our lives like all the rest of the modern and commercial world, we may be leaving Jesus out. It might be time to pick up this Infant Child and make Him a priority in our lives.

**January 1, 2012**

**Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God**

*“And Mary kept all these things, reflecting on them in her heart.” - Luke 2:19*

How lightly Mary held Jesus. She did not clutch Him to her but held Him out for the world to know. She knew that He did not belong to her alone. From the moment of His birth she was called upon to share Him with strangers who flocked to see Him. In the same way, we are also called to hold our blessings lightly, being willing to share what God has given to us with those whom God may lead to us. As this New Year begins, let us look to Mary as a grace-filled model of sharing all that God might ask of us.

**January 8, 2012**

**Epiphany of the Lord**

*“They prostrated themselves and did him homage. Then they opened their treasures and offered him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh...” - Matthew 2:11*

Notice the distinct order of events in the Magi’s visit. First they knelt before Jesus and prayed to Him. Then they presented Him with their gifts. We, too, must take time to pray before we presume to present our gifts to the Lord. We never know what gifts God might be asking us to share. But when we kneel before Him in prayer we will find the answer.

**January 15, 2012**

**2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time**

*“Jesus turned and saw them following him and said to them, ‘What are you looking for?’” - John 1:38*

What are you looking for? It is a question Jesus asks each of us. Are we wasting our time looking for the material pleasures of the world? Or are our hearts really longing for something deeper that can only be found by spending time with God?

**January 22, 2012**

**3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time**

*“Come after me, and I will make you fishers of men.” - Mark 1:17*

Jesus' call to “Come after me” is a call to all Christians. Jesus asks us all to help Him in His work. By being good stewards, we, too, can help bring others closer to God.

**January 29, 2012**

**4<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time**

*“Brothers and sisters: I should like you to be free of anxieties.” - 1 Corinthians 7:32*

How many anxieties do we bring upon ourselves by constantly worrying about attaining ever more material possessions? Yet, God tells us that only the hand that is open to give can also be open to receive His peace and joy. A heart or a hand clenched in anxiety and greed can never truly receive anything.

**February 5, 2012**

**5<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time**

*“Rising very early before dawn, he left and went off to a deserted place, where he prayed...He told them, ‘Let us go on to the nearby villages that I may preach there also. For this purpose have I come.’” - Mark 1:35, 38*

Through today's Gospel reading we see a perfect example of stewardship. Jesus gives His time to doing all that God wishes - healing the sick and preaching. Yet Jesus also makes time to be alone in prayer. It is only through prayer, through spending time with God, that any of us can find the strength to do all that God wishes us to do. Be sure to find time this week to be with God.

**February 12, 2012**

**6<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time**

*“Brothers and sisters: Whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do everything for the glory of God.” - 1 Corinthians 10:31*

Are you doing everything possible for the glory of God? Or is there maybe some other way that you could generously share your time, talent or treasure for God's glory? Think about it.

**February 19, 2012**

**7<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time**

*“He rose picked up his mat at once and went away in the sight of everyone. They were all astounded and glorified God, saying, ‘We have never seen anything like this.’” - Mark 2:12*

Have you taken any time lately to think about how truly good God has been to you? He may not have to cure your paralysis if He has already given you the gift of mobility. But do we glorify and thank Him for such simple gifts as sight, and speech, and general health? Do we generously give back to God in proportion to all the many blessings He has given to us?

**February 26, 2012**

**1<sup>st</sup> Sunday of Lent**

*“After John had been arrested, Jesus came to Galilee proclaiming the gospel of God....” - Mark 1:14*

Do you ever think about how difficult it must have been for Jesus to come into Galilee, knowing that John had just been arrested for teaching the same message that Jesus was proclaiming. It must have taken great love and trust for Jesus to do what the Father had sent Him here on earth to do. In the same way, following a life of stewardship takes great love and trust from us. We must be willing to surrender completely to God, trusting that God will always give us all that we need to fulfill His plan for us.

**March 4, 2012**

**2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday of Lent**

*"Here I am!" he answered.* - Genesis 22:11

It is easy to say, "Here I am, Lord," when we are kneeling in church. Can we just as easily answer, "Here I am, Lord," when we go home, when a neighbor needs our help, when a fellow parishioner asks us to join a committee, or when a letter asks for our financial help? These are often exactly the places where Jesus calls us to be.

**March 11, 2012**

**3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of Lent**

*"You shall not carve idols for yourselves in the shape of anything..."* - Exodus 20:4

Have you created idols for yourself in different shapes? An idol can be in the shape of money, sports, fashion, travel, or anything else we value more than God and His Word to us.

**March 18, 2012**

**4<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Lent**

*"For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son..."* - John 3:16

Of all the wonderful gifts that God has given to us, the gift of His own Son is truly the greatest. How can we ever thank God for a gift like that? God does not ask us to sacrifice our own precious firstborn, but He does ask that we be generous in making some sacrifices for Him.

**March 25, 2012**

**5<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Lent**

*"I will be their God and they shall be my people."* - Jeremiah 31:33

What does it mean to be God's people? It means that first we recognize that everything we have and everything we are truly belongs to God. It also means that we are willing to use our gifts and our lives to care for the world just as God cares for us.

***"Lord my God, give me***

***a mind to know you,***

***a heart to seek you,***

***wisdom to find you, and...***

***a hope of finally embracing you."***

....Thomas Aquinas

If you want the reflections emailed to you before each quarter, please email [ldacanay@archchicago.org](mailto:ldacanay@archchicago.org)

\*used with permission from the Archdiocese of St. Louis