2021 Stewardship Letter

Beloved in the Lord,

As I thought about what I would share with you in the 2021 Stewardship letter, I was reminded of a presentation I saw recently that described stewardship as a cycle of eight movements. This cycle starts with our acknowledgment that God is the source of everything (movement #1). The cycle then moves to our receiving of God’s gifts with thanksgiving (movement #2), and it highlights the thanksgiving, openness, humility and vulnerability of the Theotokos, in the way she received God’s gift. Movement #3 is about how the first thing we should do when we receive God’s gift is to offer the first fruits back to Him in thanksgiving. We see this as we pray in the Divine Liturgy, “Thine own of Thine own; we offer unto Thee in all and for all”. We also see this on the feast of Transfiguration, when we offer the first fruits, and at a baptism when a first offering from the hair of our head is made.

The next movement (movement #4) is about consecrating the gifts God has given us and sharing them with others. This is captured beautifully each year on Stewardship Sunday, when we ask God to bless our offerings. As stewards, we are responsible to care for all that God entrusts to us. Your stewardship supports the ministries of the church and like the loaves and the fish, we bring them to God to be blessed and then shared. As God accepts our offering, He pours forth greater abundance (movement #5). Haven’t we seen this time and time again? If you have had this experience, even once, you know that it is true. This is a reminder that there is no reason to hold on tightly to things.

In being stewards, we engage in the grace of God. Stewardship is for our own benefit, our own good. As we move through the cycle we mature in our capacity to steward God’s gifts (movement #6). We listen and learn, and are continuously “becoming” stewards. The next movement reminds us that we will have to give an account (movement #7). The movements of this cycle prepare us for Confession and repentance in this life, and for the eternal reward of the good and faithful servant (movement #8) in the age to come. Both in Confession, and at the Judgement Seat, we give an account for our stewardship.

Do we acknowledge God as the source of everything? Have we received God’s gifts with thanksgiving? Do we offer back to God first, the first fruits? Do we use God’s gifts to care for all that He entrusts to us? Are we maturing in our capacity to steward God’s gifts? These are some important questions to think about as you prepare for Confession, and as you prayerfully consider completing the enclosed stewardship card.

We ask that you return your 2021 Stewardship card by December 13th. The cards can be completed via email/online/mail in or dropped off in the stewardship tray in the Narthex (or given to Mark Hauser). Stewardship Sunday will be on Sunday, December 13th. We thank you for your faithful giving to our parish and for your prayers. May God bless our parish!

With love in the Lord,

Fr. Jerry and Fr. Steve