

SEGMENT NO 5

THEME: *LIVING AS A STEWARD*

“It was not you who chose me, but I who chose you and appointed you to go and bear fruit that will remain.” John 15:16

CALL TO PRAYER & OPENING PRAYER: As for the Order Prayers

FOCUS: *How we can collaborate with God's creation*

WORDS OF REFLECTION - *Reflect on the reading of the following:*

1. “I have learned to share because I want to, not because I need to. There are no controls, no strings attached, and no guarantee when we give unconditionally. That doesn't mean that in retrospect I haven't questioned my decisions; it simply means that I've tried to look at it as a growth experience, always keeping in mind the life of Jesus Christ. I personally see stewardship as a nurturing process. It is, in a sense, an invitation to reassess our priorities. It is ongoing and often painful, but most of all it brings a personal sense of happiness and peace of mind as I continue my journey through life.”

Jim Hogan - Green Bay, Wisconsin

2. Creation and stewardship

Although it would be a mistake to think that stewardship by itself includes the whole of Christian life, in probing the Christian meaning of stewardship one confronts an astonishing fact: God wishes human beings to be his collaborators in the work of creation, redemption, and sanctification; and such collaboration involves stewardship in its most profound sense. We exercise such stewardship, furthermore, not merely by our own power but by the power of the Spirit of truth, whom Jesus promises to his followers (cf. Jn 14:16-17), and whom we see at work at the first Pentecost inspiring the apostles to commence that proclamation of the good news which has continued to this day (cf. Acts 2:1-4). (SADR p39)

3. Collaborators in Creation

Everyone has some natural responsibility for a portion of the world and an obligation in caring for it to acknowledge God's dominion. But there are also those who might be called stewards by grace. Baptism makes Christians stewards of this kind, able to act explicitly on God's behalf in cultivating and serving the portion of the world entrusted to their care.

We find the perfect model of such stewardship in the Lord. Although Jesus is the unique priest and mediator, his disciples share in his priestly work. Baptism makes them “a royal priesthood” (1 Pt 2:9) called to offer up the world and all that is in it—especially themselves—to the Lord of all. In exercising this office, they most fully realize the meaning of our Christian stewardship.

While it is lived out by individual women and men in countless ways corresponding to their personal vocations, human cooperation with God's work of creation in general takes several forms. One of these is a profound reverence for the great gift of life, their own lives and the lives of others, along with readiness to spend themselves in serving all that preserves and enhances life. Partly too, stewardship of the world is expressed by

jubilant appreciation of nature, whose God-given beauty not even exploitation and abuse have destroyed. Beyond simply appreciating natural beauty, there is the active stewardship of ecological concern. Ecological stewardship means cultivating a heightened sense of human interdependence and solidarity. (SADR p42)

Allow a few moments reflective silence.

WORD OF GOD *Read the following text aloud slowly and prayerfully*



From the first Letter of Peter 2:9

But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's own people, in order that you may proclaim the mighty acts of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light. Once you were not a people, but now you are God's people; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.



From the Gospel of Matthew 5: 13-16

"You are the salt of the earth; but if salt has lost its taste, how can its saltiness be restored? It is no longer good for anything, but is thrown out and trampled under foot. "You are the light of the world. A city built on a hill cannot be hid. No one after lighting a lamp puts it under the bushel basket, but on the lampstand, and it gives light to all in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven.



*For the next five minutes silently read and reflect on the readings.
Underline what you consider to be key words and/or phrases for you.*

THE SHARING



Now bring your insights and reflections into discussion of the following: (10 mins)

- ❖ In your lifetime, how have you experienced co-creation with God?
- ❖ What problems & pain can you see associated with Christian stewardship?
- ❖ How do you relate Christian stewardship to ecology, to your personal care for the environment?

CONCLUSION

Leader: As we conclude this time of reflection, let us give praise to God as we say:

All: Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit;
as it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be,
world without end. Amen.

The meeting proceeds

CLOSING PRAYERS: As for the Order Prayers at the Closing of the Meeting.