

## GRATITUDE IS KEY TO LIVING A SPIRITUALITY OF STEWARDSHIP

Over the past four years, I have invited people from Our Lady of Lourdes to give our annual stewardship witness at the weekend Masses. My main criteria for these invitations is that they live their lives as Christian stewards. These are folks who are “all in” at the parish and who have been generous in sharing their gifts with our community of faith. These parishioners have been instrumental in helping the parish grow and become the vibrant community of faith that we are today. In thinking back on the various presentations of the last four years, I noted another common thread that has run through all of these talks: gratitude! Without exception, parishioners who live Christian stewardship are also people who are grateful for what God has given them. Stewardship and gratitude go hand in hand.

The other day I called Fr. Bury to give him a heads up that our parishioners were going to give the stewardship talk and that he should prepare a shorter homily. When he answered the phone, I asked him how he was doing. He paused reflectively and said: “grateful.” I have found Fr. Bury to be a good and holy priest who is generous with his time and priestly ministry. Fr. Bury is a good Christian steward and not surprisingly is also a man who is grateful. Gratitude is one of the most important Christian virtues because it acknowledges that God is the source of all good gifts. Through God’s love and bounty, we are able to receive these gifts that add value to our lives. But, are we truly grateful? Do we express gratitude to God consistently? Do we live as a spirit of gratitude in our relationship with God and with others? When Catholics celebrate the Eucharist, which literally means thanksgiving, we are invited into a great prayer of gratitude to God through which we are made more holy and Christ-like.

During this month of November – which includes the Thanksgiving holiday – we are invited to reflect on the gifts we have been given and to discern how we might use our gifts more generously to serve God and the communities in which we live. For the Christian, a life marked by generosity of spirit and by gratitude is essential to fruitful Christian discipleship. The temptation in our modern day is that our gifts become an occasion of pride as we fail to recognize God as the source of our gifts. Or we may be tempted to use our gifts to amass more and more without understanding the responsibility that attends our gifts to generously serve others. I invite all parishioners and friends to enter into a spirit of gratitude during this month of November and beyond. Reflect on how God has blessed you and where God may be calling you to more generously use your gifts to serve others.

In reflecting on how God has blessed me, I would like to express my gratitude to God and to you for various gifts in my life. First, I am grateful to God for my life, for my family and friends and for my priesthood. I am grateful to God to be able to serve this wonderful community of Our Lady of Lourdes. Additionally, I am thankful to God and to our patron Our Lady of Lourdes, for all the blessings we have received as a parish including the blessings of our Jubilee Year. I am thankful to all of you for your tremendous faith and commitment to Lourdes and for all the ways that you use

your gifts to lift up and bring light to our community. I am thankful that I have the opportunity to teach and to work at a law school that is committed to educating and forming ethical lawyers who use their gifts to serve the common good. For what are you thankful?

Please take time during this month to reflect on the blessings you have received from God and how you might use your gifts to generously serve others. I also encourage you to pray the stewardship prayer that can be found in our pews, in the bulletin and on our parish website.

*With Gratitude to God and to You,  
Fr. Griffith*