

24th Sunday of Ordinary Time •
September 12-13, 2009 • Christ the King

For the past couple of weeks, I have been reflecting on stewardship. Stewardship is not a fundraiser, or a gimmick. Stewardship is a way of life rooted in the Gospel, in the message and way of life of Jesus.

Stewardship is rooted in gratitude. Last week, we took a moment to pause, remember and give thanks to God for all of our gifts. I invited everyone to fill out an “Attitude of Gratitude” card. At the time, I wasn’t quite sure what we were going to do with those cards. As I began to look through them, I was moved. Once again, I was shown how much God loves us and how truly gifted we are. It is amazing how just one little acknowledgement of God’s grace can change the whole day. I knew that these cards had to be shared. But how? I knew where, the wall near the entrance of the church. But how? I thought about a bulletin board, but we didn’t have one large enough. Then the idea of ribbon popped into my head, and it became clear. As I hung the gratitude cards, I read each one. And again I was moved to prayer. I invite everyone to take a moment at our ‘Wall of Gratitude’ or maybe create your own at home. God has so blessed us!

Today’s readings give us another aspect of stewardship: once we are grateful, then we can reach out to others.

The other day, one of our parishioners, described stewardship as ‘getting over ourselves.’ And the more I think about that definition, the more I think it fits. Stewardship moves the focus from me, myself and I to God and others. If I only focus on what I want, what I think I need, what I think I deserve – then I create a downward spiral. But if I give thanks for all that I have, all that I am (weaknesses and shortcoming, included), that I can realize that what I have, who I am called to be. And then I can share. If I focus on what others may think of me, than I will be paralyzed with fear. But when I acknowledge that God has gifted me, that God loves me, than I can respond in love.

This week, I showed a video: Leadership: The Art of Possibility to our pastoral council. In the video a story is told a prime minister...

Person comes in all upset and bothered, remember rule #6 – “Oh, you are so right, sorry. Goes out. Another rushes in... remember rule #6. Again.... Remember rule #6.

So what is this rule #6: “Don’t take yourself so darn seriously.” That is a good rule, but can I ask what are the other rules? “Oh, there aren’t any.”

Today, Jesus tells us that we must take up our cross and follow him. Uh oh, I don’t know if I like the sound of that. What is this cross? [maybe our cross is our self-centeredness, the hoarder, that which keeps us from seeing God in one another and following him. Maybe our cross is ‘taking ourselves so seriously’; maybe it is ‘not getting over selves’ so that we can reach out to others and share the gifts that we have been.