

Living Each Day as a Steward!

The Steward's Identity

Who are you? Most often we identify ourselves by our relationships: I'm a father or mother, son or daughter, husband or wife. I'm a carpenter or teacher or businessperson or work in another of the myriad of professions now available to all. Do we identify ourselves in any other way? Particularly in any spiritual way?

Our Identity as God's Children

In his Word, God tells us not only who he is but who we are as well. Through the Gospel writer, God says that *"to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God, who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God"* (John 1:12-13). Through God's gracious gift of Baptism, the Holy Spirit works faith in our hearts to believe that Jesus is the Son of God who came to save us from sin, death, and the devil.

Our Identity as God's Heirs

Because of our *"washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit, whom he poured out on us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior,"* we are justified and have become *"heirs according to the hope of eternal life"* (Titus 3:5-7). Paul tells us that *"if [we are] children, then [we are] heirs – heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, provided we suffer with him in order that we may also be glorified with him"* (Romans 8:17). What great gifts God has given us in his Holy Word and Sacraments that we might be heirs of eternal life!

Our Identity as God's Church

Through that gift of Baptism, we become members of the Body of Christ, God's Church. And to the Church God gives *"the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the Body of Christ..."* (Ephesians 4:11-12). Each of us has an identity in this Church. St. Peter tells us, *"As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God's varied grace"* (1 Peter 4:10).



Our Identity as God's Workmanship

How blessed we are to be given by God this great privilege of working with him in his church! What is our response to this great love of God who gave even his own Son to restore his image in us when, by our sin, we lost it? We find our answer again in his Word: *"For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them"* (Ephesians 2:10).



Like Moses (Exodus 3-4), we may complain that we can't do God's works. We don't know what to say; no one will believe us; we aren't trained theologians. *"Please send someone else"* (Exodus 4:13), we beg. But God says to us as he said to Moses, *"I will be with your mouth...and will teach you...what to do"* (Exodus 4:15).



As already pointed out, God gives the gifts needed for the task he appoints us to. In addition, he *"equip[s] [us] with everything good that [we] may do his will, working in us that which is pleasing in his sight..."* (Hebrews 13:21). There is no response for us but to iterate Isaiah's offer; *"Here am I! Send me"* (Isaiah 6:8).

Our Identity as God's Stewards

We don't really want to be stewards. Our first impulse is that we want to be the owners. We want to have possession of things. We want to be important, to be respected, even to be envied. That's not how it works, though. God owns everything, *"The earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof..."* (Psalm 24:1). *"The silver is mine, and the gold is mine," declares the Lord of hosts* (Haggai 2:8). No, nothing is ours, but God has given us the high calling of stewards. *"You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit..."* (John 15:16).

From the beginning God called us to be stewards: *"Let [man] have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth"* (Genesis 1:26). With such a high calling comes responsibility. With such high honor comes accountability: *"Moreover,"* writes the Apostle Paul, *"it is required of stewards that they be found trustworthy"* (1 Corinthians 4:2). May we, like the two faithful stewards we read about in the Parable of the Talents (Matthew 25:14-10), hear our Master's gracious words, *"Well done, good and faithful servant."*

Conclusion

Bear fruit: that's what stewards do. But not on our own! God calls us, appoints us, equips us, and gives us the gifts we need to be faithful stewards. We are to preach, teach, help the helpless, serve the hungry in body and spirit, give our time, our energies, our talents, our money – all because God *"desires all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth"* (1 Timothy 2:4). He wants all his heirs to receive what is promised them, all to find fulfillment in **living each day as stewards.**