

25<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time – B  
(Stewardship Appeal)

I imagine that wherever two or three people are gathered there is the temptation to try to establish a pecking order. Today's Gospel certainly shows that the disciples were not free of this inclination.

Jesus' response is to reverse the entire question. The person who wants to take the lead must do so by serving, not by lording it over others. Service for the sake of the gospel is part and parcel of the spirituality of stewardship that we have a practice of focusing on at this time each year.

I say spirituality because stewardship is a comprehensive approach to our way of living. It applies to how we spend our time, our we develop our gifts and talents, and what we do with the good things that God has placed in our lives. "Time, talent, and treasure" may a pithy way of putting it, but it goes deeper even than that. It is an orientation to life itself that takes its example from the life of Jesus who emptied himself in service for the sake of our salvation.

The stewardship journey we have been on, Forward in Faith, is now in its fourth year. It's hard to remember what life was even like four years ago, so much has happened since then, but I want to thank you for the sacrifice you have made to keep St. Ben's up and running and still attending to its mission to proclaim the Good News and to serve God's people, come what may.

Due to your generosity, we have been able to maintain our ministries, continue to build on new initiatives, especially with regard to our outreach to young adults, attend to the maintenance needs of our facilities, and improve our presence among those in need.

“Your financial sacrifice does so much good—we care for those in need, we educate our young and adults in the faith, we administer the sacraments to all faithful parishioners and celebrate the sacraments and the Mass together in our spiritual home, and continue to offer a communal witness to the values that support the common good.”

You will be receiving a special brochure in the mail this week. It will summarize what we have been able to accomplish together this past year. The numbers are impressive! I hope will be able to take some time to review the brochure’s contents and use it to aid your reflection on your commitment and support of St. Ben’s.

Next weekend is our Commitment Weekend. We have asked members of the parish to speak at each of the Masses to share their experience of being members of St Ben’s community of disciples and the blessings they have received from being involved participants. I’m exciting to hear what they have to say because their lives already speak volumes to me about how God becomes more present in our lives when we give ourselves over to his mission of service.

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This annual process is an important event for our parish and is designed to get us all thinking about what it means to be a member and the commitment needed to advance the parish's mission.

This is what the brochure looks like this year. The commitment card that comes with it is meant to look familiar. You saw it last year. It's an offer to take stock of what we have been contributing and what we might be able to do going forward. An electronic version of the commitment card is also available online by visiting the parish website. You can make your commitment that way, too.

I want to especially thank all who have accepted the invitation to do your giving electronically. We have seen the electronic portion of our Sunday offering grow substantially and become a solid component of the overall support. We want to encourage those of you who have not made this step to consider doing so. Our overall effort has increased because of it.

Our parish community spent the past year responding to an unprecedented crisis in so many ways, and I'm not shy about saying not only how proud I am to have been a part of St. Ben's parish community, but also amazed, really. On Commitment Weekend, next Saturday and Sunday, I invite each of you to join together and participate in securing our

parish's future by continuing to take this opportunity to move "Forward in Faith."

Again, please review the brochure and prayerfully consider how you and your family can help St. Ben's by financially supporting our ministries, furthering our mission, and reinforcing our future."