

SALT *and* LIGHT

Stewardship Is Part of Our Daily Lives as Catholics

by Fr. Lawrence E. Mick

Many dioceses and parishes designate a Sunday, often in autumn, as Stewardship Sunday. Most parishioners, when they hear it announced, know that they will be asked to pledge their level of financial support for the year and perhaps also to commit their time and talent to church activities.

This is a good reminder that we are called to be responsible stewards of the gifts that God has given us. But we should also recognize that every Sunday is really a stewardship Sunday and every Monday is stewardship Monday and every Tuesday is stewardship Tuesday. Every day of our lives God calls us to be good stewards.

The story of Adam and Eve is an important way that the Bible teaches us basic truths about creation and what God expects of humanity. The garden and all of creation was entrusted to Adam and Eve. They were not the owners of creation but its stewards. As the psalmist reminds us, “The earth is the Lord’s and all it holds, the world and those who dwell in it,” (Ps 24:1).

Accepting our role as stewards means recognizing that we are not the owners of creation but those to whom it has been entrusted for a time. We are to use whatever we have been given in such a way as to preserve it for future generations.

Genesis describes God creating the universe and seeing that it was very good. Creation was designed to exist in harmony, but sin disrupted that harmony and continues to do so to this very day. It is greed and selfishness, for the most part, that causes disharmony and leads to the destruction of the environment.

Global climate change may be a new form of environmental destruction that we must confront, but the effect of greed on the lives of the poor has been with us for ages. The prophets frequently challenged the wealthy about the way their excesses deprived the poor of their basic needs.

In our time, Pope Francis has repeatedly linked care of the environment with care for the poor, for they suffer most from environmental degradation. In his homily at his inauguration, he said, “I would like to ask all those who have positions of responsibility in economic, political and social life, and all men and women of good will: Let us be ‘protectors’ of creation, protectors of God’s plan inscribed in nature, protectors of one another and of the environment.”

Some portray environmentalists as “tree huggers” more concerned with plants than with people, but true care for the earth is essential to caring for people.

We all depend on a healthy environment, and care for our planet is one of the most basic pro-life and anti-poverty issues of our time. We are all called to be good stewards of the world God has entrusted to our care and to hand it on to coming generations in good condition.

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