

3 STEWARDSHIP *Living as a Steward*

We continue to share some ideas and questions from the United States Bishop's Pastoral Letter on Stewardship and the disciple for your prayerful consideration during Advent.

As disciples, we are confronted with an astonishing fact:

God wishes human beings to be his collaborators in the work of creation, redemption and sanctification; and such collaboration involves stewardship in its most profound sense.

Work and stewardship

Sometimes we forget our Christian understanding of work. Our human achievement is, as the Second Vatican Council reminded us, a sign of God's greatness and the flowering of God's mysterious design.

The great story in the bible of God's love for humankind begins with God at work as Creator and we, made in God's image, are called to co-operate with the Creator in continuing the divine work. We are on the earth not to abuse it but to care for it and to cultivate it and so it is work that is a fundamental and key aspect of the human vocation and is intrinsic to responsible stewardship of the world.

Collaborators in Creation.

The bishops see that this human co-operation with God's work of creation takes several forms. The first is a profound reverence for the great gift of life along with the desire to preserve and enhance life. That is not always easy because we have a tendency to take life for granted.

Stewardship is also expressed in an appreciation of nature and the accompanying stewardship of ecological concern. It means cultivating a profound sense of interdependence and solidarity and calls us to address the great issues of structural poverty, use of resources in our world and the adoption of an appropriate lifestyle.

Redemption and Cooperation

We are called to accept God's grace, to repent and to struggle for change that is needed. The good steward constantly calls on God for the grace of conversion, to know who they are, to whom they belong and how they are to live.

The stewardship of the disciple is not reducible to one task or another. *It involves embracing, cultivating, enjoying sharing—and sometimes giving up—the goods of human life.* Christians strive to live this way conscious that Christ will bring everything to perfection and hand it over to the Father.

Some questions for reflection and discussion

What are the major challenges to you in becoming a good steward?

In your lifetime, how have you experienced co-creation with God?

Do you relate Christian stewardship to ecology? How?

How do you personally care for the environment?

In your reading of the scripture, what does the Word of God say to you regarding your life of stewardship?

Do you see work (your work) as taking you away from God? Why?