



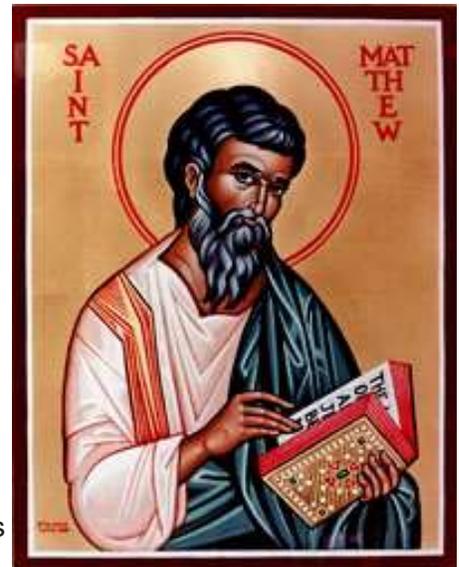
Stewardship Reflection on Lectionary Readings

September 6, 2020 — Twenty-third Sunday in Ordinary Time

[EZ 33:7-9; PS 95:1-2, 6-9; ROM 13:8-10; MT 18:15-20](#)

Today's readings are all about relationships. Among the many lessons we have learned as a result of the global pandemic is the deep importance of the relationships and communities in our lives. Our families, our neighbors, our friends and our parish family need us and we need them — not just for survival, but to be our best selves, and to help each other on the path to heaven.

Our readings today show us how we can be good stewards of these vital relationships, beginning with the first reading from the prophet Ezekiel. God says to Ezekiel, "You... I have appointed watchman for the house of Israel; when you hear me say anything, you shall warn them for me." Because of our Baptism, we are all "watchmen" for one another. We have been given the gift of our Catholic faith and we have a responsibility to lovingly and generously share that gift. As Christian stewards, we must take this call to heart every day of the week and in every setting in which we find ourselves.



This can seem overwhelming at first. Are we called to keep a sermon in our back pocket at all times? Not exactly.

St. Paul gives us simple instruction in our second reading from Romans to guide us in our dealings with others. He reminds us what Christ Himself taught: "You shall love your neighbor as yourself." Love is the overarching principle that guides us to be good stewards of our relationships and communities.

True love means seeking the good of the other. Sometimes, love requires us to speak up when it would be easier to remain silent — other times, love calls us to keep our mouths shut when we would prefer to "put someone in their place."

In our Gospel passage from Matthew, Jesus further refines this instruction on good stewardship of our relationships, even when they involve conflict. He says, "If your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault between you and him alone. If he listens to you, you have won over your brother."

What timely advice for the modern-day steward. In this age of social media, it is tempting and all too easy to take to Twitter or Facebook to vent our frustrations about someone who has offended us. This is not love. But neither is allowing a brother (or sister) to sin against us without speaking up. Jesus teaches us to confront the offending person directly and discretely — with the goal of restoring the relationship if possible. This is how we steward our relationships even through rocky waters.

Later in this passage, Jesus speaks to us of the power and beauty of community life. “If two of you agree on earth about anything for which they are to pray, it shall be granted by my heavenly Father. For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.”

Christian stewards, God has designed us in such a way that we must help each other on the journey towards heaven. Let us take care to steward our relationships well.

— *Stewardship Reflections by [Catholic Stewardship Consultants](#)*