

## Stewardship Reflection on Lectionary Readings

August 2, 2020 — Eighteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time

[IS 55:1-3](#); [PS 145:8-9, 15-18](#); [ROM 8:35, 37-39](#); [MT 14:13-21](#)

Today's readings should inspire the Christian steward with deepened gratitude to our God Who loves us with such fierce and tender love. We must make an intentional response every day to return love for Love.

In our First Reading, from Isaiah, we hear God calling to us, even trying to entice us, to come and be filled with the good spiritual food He wants to give us. "Come, receive grain and eat; Come, without paying and without cost, drink wine and milk!" And, "Heed me, and you shall eat well, you shall delight in rich fare." Note that He uses the word "heed" in that verse and then repeats it in the next, "Come to me heedfully, listen, that you may have life." We must be intentional in going to God on a regular basis through prayer and the sacraments. We must "heed" and "listen" to receive the nourishment He want to give us. We must choose Him — above our selfishness, above the worldly diversions that surround us constantly. But if we seek Him intentionally, we can be sure He will reward us: "I will renew with you the everlasting covenant, the benefits assured to David."

And we can have complete confidence in this promise of His faithful love. In our Second Reading, from Romans, St. Paul reminds us emphatically that nothing and nobody can keep God from loving us. No anguish, distress, persecution, famine... and we might add pandemic, economic loss, relationship strife — nothing — can keep our God from His faithful love for us. His love is so powerful that not only does it allow us to survive all these things and more, but, "in all these things we conquer overwhelmingly." God has got us in the palm of His hand.

And yet, this assurance is only the beginning of God's gifts to us. Today's Gospel passage from Matthew recounts the miracle of the multiplication of the loaves and fish. This of course, is a foreshadowing of the miraculous gift the Eucharist, which feeds us not with bread but with the Body, Blood, Soul and Divinity of Jesus. This is so marvelous to contemplate that it is tempting to skip right over the beginning of the passage to get to the miraculous part. But let's look at the first verses of this passage, for they reveal a little of the tender heart of Jesus for all of us.

As the passage begins we find that Jesus "withdrew in a boat to a deserted place by himself." He had just heard of the death of His cousin John the Baptist and was attempting to find a few moments of solitude. But the crowds would not leave Him alone. They followed him and tracked him down. Yet, our Lord was not frustrated with their interruption.

Rather, "his heart was moved with pity for them, and he cured their sick." What generous and compassionate love He shows. But even that is not enough for our Lord. He remains with the people, ministering to and teaching them well into the evening. The disciples suggest that Jesus should send them away so that they could buy some food. But Jesus will not hear of it. He insists that the disciples feed them right then and there. And then, He provides the miraculous abundance of food out of the few loaves and fishes the disciples could round up.

What a privilege for those disciples to participate in Christ's miraculous plan for His people. This privilege is ours, too, as Christian stewards. Let us make a grateful response to such amazing love.

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

