



Stewardship Reflection on Lectionary Readings

August 16, 2020 — Twentieth Sunday in Ordinary Time

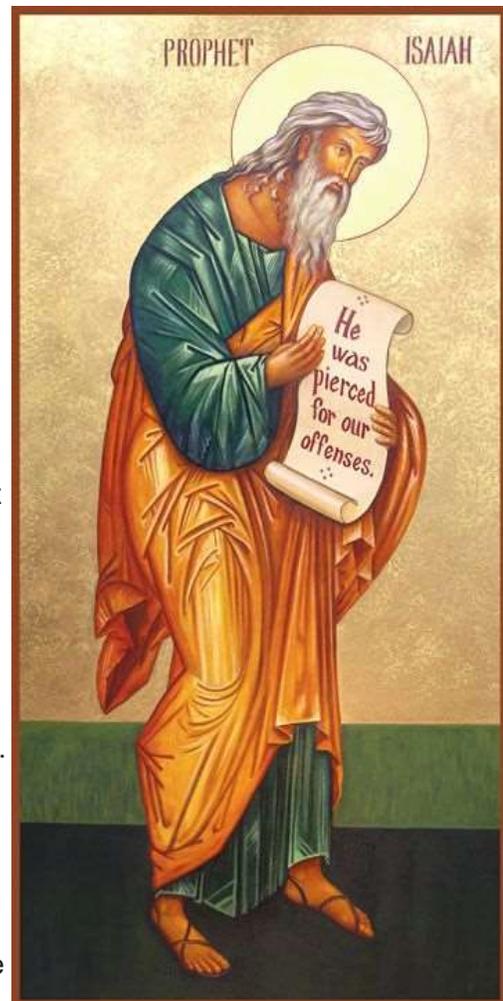
[IS 56:1, 6-7; PS 67:2-3, 5, 6, 8; ROM 11:13-15, 29-32; MT 15:21-28](#)

Our readings today remind us that God is ever-faithful, even when we are not. They challenge us as Christian stewards to show our love for this faithful God through actions, and to lean in to our trust in Him even when it seems He is not answering our prayers.

The First Reading, from Isaiah, teaches that all of humanity is invited to become the Lord's disciples. But we have to actually take Him up on the invitation by the way we live our lives. "Observe what is right, do what is just... All who keep the sabbath free from profanation and hold to my covenant, them I will bring to my holy mountain... for my house shall be called a house of prayer for all peoples." Our parish is not a country club. It is meant for all and must be a welcome place for all — where we roll up our sleeves together to serve and worship our God.

God knows we will not always get this right. We will choose selfishness and stay in our comfort zones at times, rather than embracing the daily call to discipleship. But God will never withhold His love and His gifts from us.

Our Second Reading, from the letter to the Romans, shows us, "For the gifts and the call of God are irrevocable." God is patient and merciful with us when we falter in the stewardship way of life. He brings good from even our failures as long as we continue to attempt the challenging path of discipleship. The reading closes with this reminder: "For God delivered all to disobedience that he might have mercy upon all."



And because God is indeed faithful and merciful, He wants to lead us to the joy of heaven to spend eternity with Him. For that, we must be strong in faith and live our lives as an act of love and gratitude to Him. In other words, we must allow Him to transform us into saints. This is what the stewardship way of life is meant to do. Sometimes, that will feel painful to us. Often, it will be challenging.

Jesus certainly challenged the Canaanite woman in today's Gospel passage from Matthew. She called out to Him on behalf of her daughter, who was being tormented by a demon. What did Jesus do in reply to this mother's desperate plea? Nothing. He "did not say a word in answer to her." But she was undeterred and continued to call out to Him — so much so that the disciples asked Him to send her away. Jesus does not send her away, but He does not give her what she asks for immediately either.

Instead, He continues to challenge the woman's faith. And she rises to the challenge to such an impressive degree that Jesus exclaims, "O woman [a term of deep respect in that day], great is your faith! Let it be done for you as you wish." Imagine hearing those words proclaimed over us by God. Truly, there could be no higher honor than hearing our Lord say that to us.

So we must accept the difficulties that come with the stewardship way of life. Some days will be a true challenge to our trust in God. But those are the days when God is making saints of us. Let's embrace the hard days, especially in the face of these challenging times we face today during the pandemic. The deep joy that eventually comes, the eternal reward He promises, will be so worth it. And He wants us — all of us — to have it.

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