

Msgr. Thomas McGread: Sharing our Gifts in Gratitude

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I like to call the Bible the “Textbook of Stewardship” because the scriptures are where we truly learn about stewardship. It is there that we learn how the Lord is calling us to live.

As Christian disciples, we must saturate ourselves with the scriptures. We must read and reflect on them regularly, and then go and live them out. It is in this spirit that I invite you to reflect on the words of 1 Peter 4:10: “As each one has received a gift, use it to serve one another as stewards of God’s varied grace.”

God has given each one of us a multitude of gifts. All of them are different and individual, as we all are. Some of us are great singers. Some of us are great homilists. Some of us are great listeners, which enables us to be there for others in a particular way. Sure, there are many people who have the gift of a beautiful voice or the skill to craft and deliver an insightful and moving homily, yet, each of our gifts are particular to ourselves. For example, while Fr. John and Fr. Sam both may be wonderful homilists, there is no doubt their personal style and how they preach will be different. They are individuals, and the gifts God has given them are specific to each one.

Yet, these gifts are not simply meant for people to keep for themselves.

Take a quick glance back at the passage from 1 Peter. You don’t even need to spend much time reflecting on it to notice that one of its main points is that the individual gifts we have received from the Lord are not to be hoarded or hidden away. In fact, it is quite the opposite. The gifts God has given us are meant to be shared with one another.

While we are individuals, we do not live in solitude. We were not made for solitude. We were made to live in communion with others. Even those whose vocations are to live in a cloister do not live in solitude. As members of the Church, they are closely bound to each one of us through prayer and the sacraments. In the same manner, each one of us is bound to one another as members of Christ’s Body — the Church — and we must, through the use of the gifts God has given us, work to build the Church by serving one another and helping one another grow closer to Christ.

And, so, as I take a moment and look back at the passage from 1 Peter, there are two main points that are important for all of us as Christian stewards to remember.

1. The gifts we have do not come to us by virtue of our own efforts. They come to us by the grace of God, and we must treasure them as such.
2. God gives us these gifts not so that we can simply revel in the joy of having them, but, rather, so that we can share them and build the Kingdom of God.

Next time you use your gifts – whether you’re singing or preaching or cooking or even just spending time listening to others, remember those points. Thank the Lord for his immeasurable generosity and share your gifts in gratitude.