**Advance Stewardship Reflection
on the Lectionary Readings for Homilies**

***(excerpt from Catholic Stewardship Consultants, www.catholicsteward.com)***

**Feb. 4, 2024
Fifth Sunday of Ordinary Time**[JB 7:1-4, 6-7; PS 147:1-2, 3-4, 5-6; 1 COR 9-16, 22-23; MK 1:29-39](https://catholicsteward.us1.list-manage.com/track/click?u=7966b83159749778babff90a2&id=5fce0326b4&e=8eabddb19b)

Our readings today remind us that Christ came to serve. The world often encourages us to look inward — for ways that someone or something can better serve us. Countering this typical mindset, Jesus’ entire life was focused on others. He came to fulfill His Father’s mission — the salvation of mankind. He labored for this mission by becoming the humblest of servants. This is made evident in our Gospel today. Let us recall that as disciples of Christ, we are called to be imitators — to labor for our Father’s mission by becoming humble servants.

Healing people was a central part of Jesus’ ministry. In today's Gospel, He heals Simon’s mother-in-law from a fever, in addition to those who are diseased and possessed. Jesus was becoming well known from these miracles as Simon says to Jesus, “Everyone is looking for you.” Jesus did deserve all glory and honor — yet, He did not seek after the praise. Rather, He responded by saying, “Let us go on to the nearby villages that I may preach there also.” Jesus was already looking to whom He could serve next.

As Christian stewards, we too are called to be humble servants who labor for our Father’s mission. We should strive to imitate Christ — the Perfect Steward — Who was constantly aware of the needs of those around Him and put His gifts to good use. For us, this begins right here in our home, parish, and community. It doesn’t need to be complex, but rather, very simple — to live each moment in awareness of our Father’s mission and in gratitude for all He has given us. When we intentionally live each moment for Christ, even the ordinary moments are made significant.

Jesus tells us that the way to be attentive is through prayer. Before Jesus made the decision to go to the nearby villages to preach, He first went off to pray. It is through prayer that Jesus could hear what His Father was asking of Him. We, too, are called to spend time in daily prayer — we will then become aware of the opportunities to serve the Lord.

Let us commit to finding some quiet time this week to pray. Let us ask the Lord — how can I serve You better throughout my days? And let us pray, ‘Make me humble, Lord.’