

# TOGETHER

*a monthly bulletin insert from the archdiocese*



ARCHDIOCESE  
of DUBUQUE

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## MESSAGES FROM ARCHBISHOP JACKELS



4 March 2022

### ARCHBISHOP REFLECTS ON GATHERING FOR PRAYER OUTSIDE OF SUNDAY MASS

One sign of an authentic follower of Jesus, and so also of an active community of believers, such as a parish, is to say daily prayers and worship at Sunday Mass.

Some of our parishes don't have Mass every Sunday, and many don't have it every weekday, sometimes just a few days, or not at all.

That might be temporary, because the priest is on sabbatical, or when there's no priest to assign as Pastor or sacramental priest.

Or maybe permanent, because 1 priest serves numerous parishes, and daily Mass in each isn't possible due to Church limits on how many Masses he can say.

But even if there is no Mass in the parish, parishioners could still gather in the parish church for prayer and/or worship, whether on Sunday or weekdays.

Surely there are parishioners who are willing and able to unlock/lock the church, turn lights on/off, adjust the heating/cooling, and lead prayers, such as...

The Liturgy of the Word or Liturgy of Hours for SCAP, and Eucharistic Adoration, Rosary, Chaplet of Divine Mercy, or the Way of the Cross on weekdays.

Distribution of Holy Communion could be part of SCAP on Sundays and other holy days

of obligation, but normally not on weekdays.

Aside from the benefit from prayer or worship, we're taught and reminded of important spiritual messages just by the act of gathering, for example:

1. The Mass is our greatest prayer, true, but not the only prayer, or even the only expression of Church worship.

2. We pray and worship even if there isn't a Church law obliging us; we are driven by the love of God, not by law.

3. We need priests, yes, but not for everything. We don't need the priest's permission or presence to gather. Lay people can also lead prayers and some forms of worship.

4. If the church is not used from one Sunday to the next, that isn't good stewardship, or indicative of an active parish, if a parish at all, in the truest sense of the word.

5. We can't follow Jesus alone, without also being members of his Catholic Church.

6. In Christ, there's radical equality: no Jew or Greek, slave or free, male or female.

Those are also reasons why gathering for prayer or worship with the community in church, when we're able, is always preferable to an on-screen Mass.

For Lent, why not start a practice that we can (and should?) continue after Easter, like helping to gather parishioners in church for prayer or worship even when there's no Mass on a weekday or a Sunday.

**Michael O. Jackels**  
Archbishop of Dubuque



### How to be the Church of the Poor, for the Poor, Stewardship as a Way of Life

*This is the second half of a teaching document written by Archbishop Michael Jackels titled, "How to be the Church of the Poor, for the Poor, Stewardship as a Way of Life" which was originally published in August of 2021.*

*The first half of the document was published in last month's Together. The first two principles of stewardship were explained: 1.) God owns everything and 2.) Everything is on loan from God for me to manage. This month we conclude with principles 3-5 and the conclusion.*

#### 3) I am wowed by the honor, bowed by the duty (continued)

We are wowed that God entrusts us to care for creation, which reflects Divine Glory, and which was declared by God the Creator as good.

We are bowed by the duty to care for all creation, including to protect the innocent from harm and animals from mistreatment, as well as avoiding wasting resources.

We are also bowed by the duty to ensure the universal destination of goods, sharing with the poor and the Church what we don't need for ourselves or our dependents.

#### 4) What God entrusts to my stewardship is not just for me

The fourth principle of stewardship is that what God entrusts to my stewardship is not just for me.

Pope Leo XIII, in *Rerum Novarum*, explained

that the blessings a person receives from “the divine bounty” are for the purpose of “perfecting his own nature,” but not only.

He went on to say that, “at the same time, [recipients] employ them, as the stewards of God’s providence, for the benefit of others.”

What God owns is on loan to us to use, first of all, to provide for ourselves and our dependents; charity begins at home, says St. Paul (1 Timothy 5:4).

It’s also to be shared with the poor, which is why Moses gave the instruction for people to leave something in the field, on the vine, and in the olive tree for the poor to gather (Deuteronomy 24:19-21).

What God entrusts to us is also shared to support the Church. St. Paul traveled the known world at the time to preach the Gospel, but also to take up a collection for the Church in Jerusalem (1 Corinthians 16:1).

God doesn’t compel our sharing with threats, except for maybe, it would seem, with regard to helping the poor: Jesus says we stand to lose Heaven if we don’t help (Matthew 25:32-46).

Nor does God entice us with rewards, like no-tuition Catholic school, except for maybe the promise to give us an abundance of whatever we’re willing to share with others (Luke 6:38).

Sharing with the poor and to support the Church, as well as the worship of God on Sunday at Holy Mass, are the most important ways we practice our holy Catholic Faith.

### 5) I live to give life and gladness to others

The fifth principle of stewardship is that I live to give life and gladness to others; we give to live a filled-full and joyful life.

Jesus gave his followers an everlasting reminder of his life, teaching, and ministry in the Holy Eucharist: bread and wine, mystically transformed into his Body and Blood.

At the Last Supper Jesus used wheat bread and grape wine. Some might say he had to because that’s what the Law of Moses required. Maybe.

It could be that Jesus would have used bread and wine anyway, as a way to express his central message of the Kingdom of God, and to provide a memorial of it.

Wheat is ground to make flour, baked into

bread to be the basic food to keep us alive. Grapes are crushed for their juice, fermented into wine, to make our hearts merry.

Wheat and grapes don’t have a say in the matter, but if they did, they would give themselves happily, for that is their fulfillment – they live to give life and gladness.

That expresses what Jesus did: To die for love of you is why I came, Jesus said; in other words, to live to give, even his very self in order to bring life and gladness to others.

This also captures Jesus’ teaching that, to be his follower, you have to deny yourself, and take up your cross. That can’t mean we’re to suffer and die – who would follow?

But Jesus took up his cross to do what we couldn’t do for ourselves: to put ourselves in right relationship with God. Our cross is to do for others what they can’t do for themselves.

We’re to live to give life and gladness to others, no matter who it is, or if they say please and thank you. And if there’s suffering, it’s from the work of serving, or the loss of sharing.

This is the message of the Kingdom of God, expressed in wheat and grapes, bread and wine: find your fulfillment and joy in living to give life and gladness to others.

In 2013, Harvard University affirmed the teaching on biblical stewardship with a scientific study, reported in the Grant Study: a happy, fulfilled life is the result of living for, giving to, helping out, sharing with, serving, even sacrificing self for another.

Live to give life and gladness to others. Give to live a filled-full, happy life yourself.

### Conclusion

Stewardship is a way of life that is truly about putting into practice the example and teaching of Jesus on being the Church of the poor, for the poor.

Let’s be clear: Jesus wasn’t poor. He had a house in Capernaum. And he must’ve ate well and drank wine, because his enemies called him a glutton and a drunkard.

Also, Jesus didn’t teach that his followers had to be poor. There were wealthy people among his followers, like Matthew, Zacchaeus, Mary of Magdala, Susanna, and Joanna.

In fact, those wealthy women help us to understand the true meaning of biblical

stewardship and gospel poverty, that is, living a shared life of self-gift in service.

The Gospel of Luke records how those wealthy women shared their wealth to pay for what Jesus and his followers needed to live on (8:2-3).

And the Acts of Apostles records how the first Christians contributed to a common fund, which was doled out by the Apostles, according to each one’s need, and it is said that no one among them was in need (4:32-37).

If you want to see what that looks like today, go visit the home where a community of women or men Religious live.

We might say that they live rather well, but that’s because they live a shared life, where people give of themselves, in service of others, each other in their community.

And that’s what people in the world could live like if we all did the same, sharing what we “own” to provide for and protect those who can’t do for themselves.

St. James says that saving faith is practiced by helping the poor, which he calls the practice of a pure, unspoiled religion (1:27)...

And St. Peter says that the love behind that can cover a multitude of sins (1 Peter 4:8)...

Which, says St. Paul, can keep us holy until the day of Jesus’ return at the end of time (1 Thessalonians 3:13)...

And about that day, Jesus says that he will judge us on whether or not we helped the poor: those who do, will enjoy Heaven; those who don’t, won’t (Matthew 25).

This is what we’re to do, so that it might eventually be said of our world today what was said of the apostolic Church in Jerusalem: no one among them was in need (Acts 4:34).

When that happens – when no one among us is in need – the Kingdom will come, we will see new heavens and new earth, and Jesus will return on the clouds, in glory.

St. Peter exhorts us to hasten the day of the Lord’s coming by conducting ourselves in holiness, which for Christians means charitable service and sacrifice, shown by helping the poor (2 Peter 3:12).

Come, Lord Jesus, come!

*This document can be found online at [www.dbqarch.org/stewardship-catechism](http://www.dbqarch.org/stewardship-catechism).*