

We Are All Stewards  
10/8/17

Normally, the weekend after the Ministry Fair, when we focus on stewardship of time and talent, I address the importance of stewardship of treasure. I plan to do that in just a bit; but first, I feel compelled to speak to you about the events in Las Vegas last weekend.

It is hard for me as a Christian to comprehend how someone could become so far off course as to think the slaughter of so many innocent people for no apparent reason would be deemed not only appropriate but in some demented sense okay. You and I and most decent human beings know that we are called to love our neighbor as we love ourselves.

I think of the tenants in the vineyard in today's Gospel and wonder what they were thinking when they beat and killed the servants sent to gather the produce, eventually even killing the landowner's son. What deranged sense of logic could have led them to do such heinous acts? We are not told why, and we may never know, just like we may never know what led the Las Vegas gunman to take the actions he did.

Paul reminded the Philippians that bearing fruit in our lives, being true and honorable, just and pure, lovely and gracious is the fruit God desires from all. God's people have a responsibility to bear fruit. No one is let off the hook. God expects a return for love so lavishly given and that return is loving each other.

Let me now move on to stewardship of treasure, by sharing a reflection from Msgr. Ralph Kuehner. He suggests that, as Matthew tells the story, a dreamer dreamt of a bountiful grape harvest. The story never really says what his plans were for the harvest, just that he hoped and dreamed it would be bountiful. That's how it is with dreams; they begin with hope in the clouds and tend toward hope made flesh.

As the story continues, by deciding to keep the harvest to themselves his workers turn the dream into a devilish nightmare, one that dead-ends; but because dreams refuse to die, the property owner in

turn dead-ends the harvesters of the nightmare and starts the dream all over with new workers. End of story; return to dream.

Msgr Kuehner goes on to say that we tend not to think of God as such a perpetual and insistent dreamer; maybe because for us dreams do not always come to fruition. Nevertheless, dreams are a good portion of why we keep coming back to church each week, because we need to know that God hasn't given up on the vineyard.

Perhaps we come here looking for a glimpse of whether God is still working in our world; and whether God still knows what He's doing. One way or another we come needing to hear a description of the dream, needing to be told that the divine dream is still out there, still giving breath to the master plan, still being harvested.

When you receive the annual stewardship letter this coming week, you will notice a couple of changes. I mention them in the letter and in my bulletin column this weekend so I don't feel a need to go into great detail now. This year I am not only asking for a financial pledge but also a pledge of time and talent. In addition, we are attempting to clean up our parish database and are therefore asking each household to provide your basic information.

Three years ago, when we kicked off our capital campaign, I quoted Bobby Kennedy, who once said: "Some men see things as they are and say, 'Why'? I dream of things that never were and say, 'Why not?'" Well, just like Bobby Kennedy and just like the landowner, I have a dream too. I dream of a time when this parish will be able to put aside a portion of our revenue for the poor and needy. I dream of a time when this parish will be able to set aside a portion of our revenue for a rainy day fund. But I can't do that without your help.

If you already make a time or talent or financial contribution to the parish, I thank you. If not, please consider doing so. As Doug Fangmeier said last week, the time for taking action is now.