

Our Work is Loving the World: *A Lenten Stewardship Reflection*

Insightful stewardship expressions can be found in any number of poems we read reflectively. In the poem "Messenger" for instance, the poet Mary Oliver writes: "My work is loving the world."

What does the poet mean by her use of the word "work" in relationship to "loving?" How can Christian stewards make prayerful use of this reflection during the season of Lent?

The forty days of Lent provide stewards with a marvelous opportunity to evaluate the nature of our life's "work." Being reminded to take a meaningful and substantive spiritual "pause" in our lives for forty days is a gift in itself. Sometimes, we have good intentions to improve our spiritual lives. But we tend to put it off. The season of Lent begins by reminding us of the brevity of our lives, and then presents us with the immediacy of forty days to focus more intensely on our life in Christ. This is the first step toward embracing Christian stewardship as a way of life.

It's a good number, forty days; good enough to provide structure to help us open our hearts to conversion as we examine just what our "work" in this world should genuinely be about. As we imagine what Jesus must have done in the desert for forty days, we have the opportunity to examine our lives and vocation, as well as our strengths, weaknesses and temptations. Oliver probably realizes that if most of us are asked what our "work" is, we would reply with a description of how we earn our paycheck or take care of our family. In a sense, this is correct. We all have to support ourselves and provide for our families. Oliver would hardly reject that necessity. But her poem also suggests that, no matter how we spend our lives, there must be a deeper dimension to our life's purpose; a way of engaging the world with our loving presence. Indeed, there is a Catholic worldview that encourages us to pray for and to act in ways that make a difference in a world that is hungry for Christ's love.

For Christian stewards, bringing Christ's loving presence into our work and our workplace is necessary in order to live in the world as disciples of the Lord. It is key to living the Christian life in our world today.

The very word "work" connotes a certain dedication and commitment, indeed a certain obligation. This rings true in Oliver's simple line. As Christian stewards, we have a fundamental obligation to love and embrace the world as ambassadors of Christ. The season of Lent provides us with a singular opportunity to examine how well we're doing and to make an even greater commitment to exercising good stewardship of all the Lord has entrusted to us.



ST. MONICA PARISH

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PASTOR: **Rev. Mark Bautista**
DEACON: **Wilbur Victoria**

PARISH OFFICE HOURS
Monday – Friday
9:30 am – 1 pm / 1:30 pm – 4:30 pm

MASS SCHEDULES
WEEKDAYS: **9:00 am**
SATURDAYS: **9:00 am & 5:00 pm**
SUNDAYS: **9:00 am, 11:00 am**
& 4:00 pm (YVR)

CONFESSION SCHEDULES
SATURDAYS: **9:45 am—10:30 am**
20 minutes before Daily Mass

BAPTISM every Saturday @ 11am
WEDDING – Please call the Parish Office
at least 6 months in advance.
FUNERAL, HOUSE BLESSING, SICK CALL
Please call the Parish Office.

WEDNESDAY:
Perpetual Help Novena after 9am Mass
FRIDAY:
Holy Hour after 9am Mass
1st SATURDAY:
Rosary for Vocation after 9am Mass

Fifth Sunday of Lent **Weekend of March 16/17, 2024**

We hear in the Gospel, Jesus inviting his disciples into a great mystery with curious pronouncements: Those who love their lives just as they are will lose them. If a grain of wheat dies, it will bear much fruit...What does Jesus mean? The climactic event of Jesus' passion and death is drawing closer; a time when the great confrontation between Jesus and the powers of darkness take place. When Jesus is lifted up, he will draw all to himself. The Christian steward knows life can't be lived in complacency. We are called to die to self, bear more fruit, be raised up with Jesus. Jesus brings discomfort to those who are comfortable. Jesus urges us to give witness in his name. How will we respond?

John 12:24

**"Unless a grain of wheat
falls to the ground and dies,
it remains just a grain of wheat;
but if it dies, it produces much fruit."**

Second Collection: Share Lent

This Lent, Development and Peace—Caritas Canada, the official international solidarity organization of the Catholic Church in Canada, invites you to stand with small-scale farmers and peasant communities through their *Create Hope: Reaping our Rights* campaign. Your generosity will help support over 73 projects in 36 countries around the world, helping address the root causes of poverty, oppression, and inequality. On Solidarity Sunday, March 17, the Fifth Sunday of Lent, please consider making a tax-deductible donation in person at the parish or online at rcav.org/share-lent.

With Christ in Sorrow: Ignatian Contemplation and Holy Hour

"Turn to Jesus Crucified, and let him be both the basis and source of your contemplation." - Saint Jean de Brébeuf

At the beginning of the Holy Week of the Lord's Passion, come and enter into the Paschal Mystery by praying with Scripture and meditating on the events that redeemed us and showed us the great and abounding love and example that Christ set for us. Hosted by the Jesuit Vocation Committee in Vancouver, our afternoon will be guided by Father Edmund Lo, and will include prayer time with Eucharistic Adoration. On Palm Sunday, March 24, 4:30 p.m. to 6:00 pm. at St. Monica's Parish in Richmond. All men aged 19-39 are welcome! Learn more at beholdvancouver.org/events.

Marriage Anniversary Mass 2024

"Love isn't easy. No. But the most beautiful thing that a man and a woman can give each other is true love, for a lifetime." - Pope Francis

On Sunday, May 12, Archbishop Michael Miller, CSB will be honouring couples celebrating milestone marriage anniversaries: five-year increments from 5 to 60 years, and every year beyond 60 years. The Marriage Anniversary Mass will be at Our Lady of the Assumption Parish in Port Coquitlam at 1:30 p.m. Registrations received by Friday, April 19, will receive their certificate at the Mass. Learn more and register at family.rcav.org/mam.

God has not chosen you to be holy merely for your own advantage. Rather, the gifts God conferred upon you are to be for the spiritual & physical advantage of your neighbor. –St Frances of Rome

The Parish will have 'Bread & Soup Dinner' on Good Friday (4:30pm) inside the Hall. Sign up sheet to bring Bread & Vegetable Soup is at the Foyer. Thank you for your generosity.

Parish Penitential Service—Wednesday, March 20 @ 6:30 PM

HOLY WEEK OBSERVANCES

Palm Sunday, March 24—9 AM, 11 AM

Palms will be distributed on Saturday, March 23 @ 5 pm

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EASTER TRIDUUM

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Holy Thursday, March 28

LORD'S SUPPER – 7 PM ~ ADORATION inside the HALL – 8pm to 11pm

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Good Friday, March 29

CONFESSION – 10:30am to 11:30am ~ STATIONS OF THE CROSS – 2 PM

PASSION OF THE LORD – 3 PM ~ BREAD & SOUP DINNER – 4:30 PM

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Holy Saturday, March 30 EASTER VIGIL – 8:30 PM

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EASTER SUNDAY, March 31 9 AM, 11 AM

The Enshrinement of 'San Pedro Calungsod' statue at St Monica will be on APRIL 19. Parish will be giving chasubles to 2 Bishops & 10 Priests attendee. We are now accepting minimum donations of \$125 (bishops chasuble) & \$75 (priests chasuble).