

Offering Our Blessings

The God who came to us at Bethlehem continues to come to us today. In every liturgy He comes to us as the Word of God, bringing words of eternal life through the Scripture readings and the sermon. Through the Sacrament of Communion He comes to be born again and again in the shabby stables of our hearts. He comes constantly through prayer. He blesses our marriages as He did that in Cana of Galilee . He stands by our sick bed, laying His healing hand upon us through the prayers of the priest. He comes again and again in so many, many ways through the many ministries of His Church. He comes with healing and forgiveness; He comes with strength and guidance. He comes and when He comes, as the Bible says, “the blind see, the lame walk, and the prisoners are set free.”

It is by offering our blessings back to God that He will be able to continue His forgiving, healing, liberating, empowering, transfiguring, loving ministry through the Church. For God, Infinite though He be, has chosen to work through us, through our gifts, to continue His saving work in the world today.

Father Anthony M. Coniaris



STEWARDSHIP MINISTRY

GREEK ORTHODOX ARCHDIOCESE OF AMERICA

DEPARTMENT OF STEWARDSHIP,
OUTREACH & EVANGELISM
www.stewardship.goarch.org

Text:

Fr. Jim Kordaris

Iconography:

afentoulis.com

Graphic Design:

Christina Meares

For additional copies of this brochure and additional resources for Stewardship, Outreach & Evangelism, please visit orthodoxmarketplace.com

Well done good & faithful servant

Matthew 25:23



STEWARDSHIP
MINISTRY

There was a man who took a shovel into his backyard each day to dig up a box containing money that he had buried in the ground. Every day he would look at it, count it, and then bury it again.

One day he dug in the usual spot and found that his box and the money were gone. He let out a cry, which brought his neighbor to ask what was the matter. Upon hearing what had happened, the neighbor asked, “What’s all the fuss? You weren’t using it anyway. Maybe the person who has it now will use it to do something good!”

In the Gospel of Matthew, we read the Parable of the Talents, in which a man leaving on a long journey called three of his servants and entrusted to each a certain sum of money measured in talents. To one he gave five, to another he gave two and to the third, he gave one talent. Upon his return, the man called his servants to give account for the money with which he had entrusted them. The first two, by wise use of the money had doubled the amount they had received. To these he praised with the words, “Well done, good and faithful servant; you were faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your lord.”

The third servant, who had received one talent, out of fear, had buried the talent in the ground. Upon the man’s return, this servant returned to him only the one talent. In anger, the man called him a “wicked and lazy servant,” and taking away the one talent, he gave it to the servant who had ten.

Jesus gave us this parable for us to consider the gifts that God has given us. Although we all receive different gifts, there is no difference in God’s reward for what we accomplish with them. If you want to be a faithful servant, then take whatever you have and offer it faithfully to the Lord. It is not about how much ability you have, it is what you do with it.

The gifts we receive are to be multiplied. They are not to be buried in the ground. About this, Saint Gregory the Great wrote that hiding our talent in the earth, is to use our gifts only for earthly things.

**“Every man shall give as he is able, according to the blessing of the Lord thy God which He hath given thee.”
Deuteronomy (16:17)**

In the time of Jesus, a talent referred to substantial amount of money. The message to us today is that God gives each of us something of considerable value and expects good stewardship and a return on what He has

given. Although Jesus speaks to us about money in the Parable of the Talents, He is really talking about something far more important.

Whatever blessings we receive, we are to multiply them. We were given our church – our local parish – built by our ancestors and all who have gone before us. We are to grow it – to multiply it – by adding to the number of faithful and growing her ministries. In the Old Testament book of Deuteronomy (16:17), we read, “Every man shall give as he is able, according to the blessing of the Lord thy God which He hath given thee.”

When we cling tightly to our wealth, we are like the man, when forced to swim from a sinking ship, couldn’t bear to leave his money behind. He strapped his gold to his body, but as he swam toward shore, the weight of the gold pulled him under and he drowned. Do we own our money or does our money own us?

God gave us his love – do we multiply it or do we keep it for ourselves?

God gave us the Gospel – do we multiply it or do we keep it for ourselves?

God gave us the Church – do we multiply it or do we keep it for ourselves?

Our gift to God and His Church is a sacred act, a form of worship, and a response to all his blessings in our life -- our bodies, our family, the environment, our time, our faith, our neighbor.

Stewardship is our spirituality in action, our faith in action, our theology in action.

Stewardship is personal – between Jesus and us – an expression of love and commitment. A response to all that he has given us.

Some day we will stand before God and show Him what we did with all that He entrusted to us. If we have been faithful stewards of our gifts, He will say to us, “Well done, good and faithful servant. Enter into the joy of your Lord.”

