

PERSPECTIVE

As we pause to celebrate our many wonderful accomplishments and the growth of our parish, I am reminded of the parable of the three bricklayers, which highlights the importance of perspective. The advancement of our spiritual and communal purpose, as parishioners of this church, relies on each of us knowing our purpose as a steward, bringing our life's motivations, talents, and skills to our parish, and thereby bringing our parish to life. The story is attributed to Christopher Wren, the architect commissioned to rebuild St. Paul's Cathedral in London after the great fire of 1666. Five years into the massive project, he stopped to pose a simple question to three bricklayers. "What are you doing?" he asked. The first replied, "I am a bricklayer, working hard to feed my family." The second offered, "I am a builder. I am building the walls of a church." The third answered, "I am a cathedral builder. I am building a great cathedral to God." Their physical task was the same, but their perspective was vastly different. We might notice that the focus of the first was a job. For the second, it was an occupation. For the third, it was a calling. If we are fortunate enough to experience a role that taps into our God-given design, we know it is possible for that role to provide us the opportunity to fulfill our purpose and to understand that our personal mission can be wherever God places us at a moment in time. As stewards, our mission may seem mundane on the surface; but if we place our stewardship in the proper context and understand how it contributes to a noble cause, our mission becomes far more rewarding. If our perspective is limited to the self, then the message we are sending is, "It doesn't matter what you do with your bricks. Just hurry up and get your own pile." But we know that this does not lead to fulfillment or happiness. Is there something for us to learn from the parable of the bricklayers? Scripture affirms that we have maximum satisfaction and joy when what we do lines up with our God-given talents, desires, and passions, whether that is using a particular set of skills, serving a specific group of people, sharing an expertise, or supporting a particular cause. In Philippians 2:13, St. Paul says, "For it is God who works in you both to will and to do for His good pleasure." If one defines success as happiness, then we must ask ourselves, "what type of environment and culture do I want to help cultivate, which will allow me to best thrive and find the most joy?" For example, where can I best practice my Christian values, including positively impacting others, especially those less fortunate than me? What does God have in mind for the motivations He built into each of us? Perspective has power. It changes attitudes. It empowers us to work towards a greater good. It transforms every task into an opportunity to be a cathedral builder instead of just a bricklayer. This year, we have achieved many milestones and accomplishments; and I want to thank you for your continued support, confidence, and many contributions. Our church community rests on a strong foundation, which we have built together, working collaboratively and enthusiastically, in each case, guided by a spiritual and communal mission and perspective. +