

21ST FIRST SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

Jesus, in today's gospel reading, tells Peter that he will build his church upon him after Peter had confessed that Jesus was the Christ, the Son of the living God.

"...I say to you, you are Peter and upon this rock I will build my church."

The term "church" means the community of those who, through faith and baptism, accept the offer of salvation in Christ, who receive it ever anew and transmit it to others through proclamation and witness.

As Christians who have received the offer of salvation in Christ St Peter in his first letter urges us to be good stewards of God's gift.

"As each one has received a gift, use it to serve one another as good stewards of God's manifold grace." (1 Peter 4: 10)

In the light of what Peter is telling us stewardship is seen as the grateful response of a Christian disciple who recognizes and receives God's gifts and shares these gifts in love of God and neighbor.

As Christian disciples we need to show gratitude to God always for his gifts; his grace and use the gifts to serve others. We need to respond to God's gifts, God's grace by being generous with our time, talents and treasure.

What I am dragging at here is that our transmitting of the offer of our salvation in Christ to others in works of catechesis, justice and mercy will help us to build a deeper sense of Christian community. That is, our involvement in the activities of the parish, St Mary's will help the parish to become a true community of faith, love and belongingness within which the Christian way of life is learned and practiced.

We must always remember that the vitality of our parish life or its absence, the ability or inability of the parish to render needed services to its members and the community depend upon all.

It is for this reason that today we have Stewardship Ministry Fair in the parish hall after Mass to give you the opportunity to reflect on your responsibility for the parish ('ownership of the parish') in order to contribute generously both money and personal service to the programs and projects of the parish.

The fair brings our attention to the practice of stewardship. It helps us to see stewardship as a way of our Christian life.

So I would like all of you after Mass to go the parish hall to learn more about various ministries in the parish and see the one through which you will like to exercise your stewardship.

The second reading of today contains a hymn of praise to God by St Paul for the wisdom and love shown in proclaiming the Good news to the Gentiles when his own people rejected it.

Let us make ours that hymn of St Paul and praise God for the wisdom and the love He has displayed in guiding not only the universal church but also this particular church which is our Christian community by offering our Time, Talent and Treasure for his glory.