Everyday Stewardship

"The Story of the Other Wise Man" by Henry Van Dyke was first published in 1895. It tells the fictional story of Artaban, a fourth wise man who began a journey to visit Jesus, the newborn King. Unlike his fellow Magi, he failed to make it there for the birth of Jesus because he kept pausing to help various people in need. In fact, it took him about 33 years of searching before his quest comes to an abrupt end when he is hit in the head with a falling roof shingle. His final breath takes place in Jerusalem near the place where Jesus is being crucified. As he lies dying, he hears the voice of Jesus telling him that the gifts he has given all along the way to "the least of these" he has actually given to Jesus himself.

If you have never read this story or seen the made-for-television movie based on the tale, you really should seek it out. It is a story that reminds us of a profound truth: Jesus himself rests in the lives of all those around us in need. In the story, it was the wise man's constant response to a stewardship call that prevented him from getting where he wanted to go. In the end, where he needed to go was more significant than where he thought he should go.

If we live lives of generosity and graciousness, we may find ourselves on constant detours from the road on which we are traveling. It is in the detours and the unexpected circumstances of our journey that often times we find our true purpose in life. We think God is somewhere we must travel to, when in reality, God is closer than we think in the least likely of places.  

(― Tracy Earl Welliver, MTS)

"Behold, magi from the east arrived in Jerusalem, saying 'Where is the newborn king of the Jews? We saw his star at its rising and have come to do him homage.' How strange to journey so far for perhaps so little. Of course the magi go to the capital city. Of course they entreat with King Herod. Of course this is where they expect newborn royalty to be. But where is the child? "In Bethlehem of Judea", the scribes say. And so the magi go on to what is yet another Christmas miracle.

We don't know where the magi met the Christ Child, but it cannot have been lavish. Perhaps it was the stable. Perhaps it was a small hovel Joseph had found to wait out the census. But it would have been the home of a laborer, worn and threadbare. Here, in this unassuming abode, the magi are still "overjoyed...they prostrated themselves and did him homage".

Have you ever gotten to the end of a great work and found the results to be underwhelming? How did you respond? Were you disappointed or elated at God's providence and your upended expectations? The magi journeyed hundreds of miles over treacherous terrain to pay homage to royalty they have seen prophesied in the stars. They encountered an ordinary family displaced from their home. This Sunday, the magi are an example for us. Can we see God in the unexpected? Do we encounter Him in the person who doesn't fit our expectations of propriety? Do we revere Christ's presence in the poor? Or do we expect to meet God only in places of honor and esteem? This week, ask God for the grace to honor Him in the unexpected places and unassuming people. He is waiting for you!

Questions of the Week

How has an encounter with the Lord led me in a new way? Am I willing to change my route in the future?
The Sisters of the Immaculate Heart of Mary, Mother of Christ are inviting men and women, who while still living their individual lifestyle, respond to a call from God to live out their Christian commitment by sharing in the life of prayer, mission and charism.

When: February 8, 2020
(1st meeting)
Where: The Convent
Time: 4:00 PM

I would like to thank all the parishioners for the cards and gifts I received this Christmas. Your generosity was greatly appreciated. May the peace and joy of this season be with you and your family. Wishing you a Blessed New Year!

Father Hayes