

Becoming Stewards: The 4 “B’s” of [Non]Stewardship

In the previous article we thought about one of the preconditions of stewardship: what comes before stewardship is our relationship with creation. Before we are stewards, we are; because we exist, we are stewards of the relationships in which we exist, the relationships upon which our existence depends. In this article, we think together about something that lies behind stewardship: the peace of God which passes all understanding.

Behind Stewardship...

In the Church year calendar, this coming Sunday is called “The Second-Last Sunday After Pentecost.” The first reading is from Daniel 12, turning our thoughts toward the vision Daniel saw of a battle of battles that would end world order and save God’s people from terror and persecution. These thoughts converge with Remembrance Day this year, the special date on our national calendar when we remember our national war veterans and their sacrifices. Both observances focus on peace: on Remembrance Day we give thanks that our veterans fought to restore peace, and we pray for peace; and on the Second Last Sunday After Pentecost we thank God for the peace of Christ that keeps our hearts and minds during the conflicts of our world even as we pray for the peace of Christ to come to all the world. Behind our stewardship in both church and society is peace.

There is no stewardship in war. When my great-great grandfather saw his sons off to their military service in Europe, he said to them: “Remember: emperors make war when they no longer wish to make peace.” People prosper in peacetime: if an economy depends on war, then there is something wrong with that economy.... Peace is the gift of God, the gift we must carefully steward before we can become stewards of anything else. The stewards of peace lay the cornerstones for the world that emerges from the world’s wars. That cornerstone, the only cornerstone that anyone can lay, is Jesus Christ, the Prince of Peace. That is why I believe on the Second Last Sunday of the Church Year and on Remembrance Day we hear the words of Daniel’s post-apocalyptic vision:

At that time, your people shall be delivered, everyone found written in the book of life. Many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life and some to shame and everlasting contempt. Those who are wise shall shine like the brightness of the sky, and those who lead many to righteousness, like the stars forever and ever.

Let us pray: May the peace of Christ keep our hearts and minds now and always. Amen