



**Homily of His Eminence Frank Cardinal Leo
Metropolitan Archbishop of Toronto
Stewardship Sunday - 20 September 2026**

My Dear Brothers and Sisters in the Lord,

Praised be Jesus Christ.

Today is Stewardship Sunday which is observed annually across the Archdiocese of Toronto on the third Sunday of September. The parable which our blessed Lord taught, at first glance doesn't appear to be about stewardship at all. It seems to be about a vineyard, odd hiring practices, and unfair wages. But if we listen closely, we discover it is really about how we live and experience what has been entrusted to us.

Notice how the parable unfolds. The landowner goes out again and again: early morning, mid-morning, noon, afternoon, even the eleventh hour. God does not call us once; there are a series of invitations throughout life. Stewardship, then, is listening to these grace-filled invitations and being faithful to the hour we are in.

The trouble begins when the early workers stop living in their present moment. They measure their whole day against someone else's final hour. Comparison pulls them away from their own call and blinds them to the situation of others; namely the late workers. Those who waited in the marketplace until the final hour were not on vacation; they were unwanted, passed over. Anyone who has been unemployed knows the pain of being overlooked and the fear of not having what it takes, not having the basic necessities of life. Imagine their joy and relief when they received the "usual daily wage". The "wage" given is not their pay for an hour's labour—it is mercy and a restoration of dignity and underscores God's generosity and providential care for us.

One great danger of the spiritual life, and indeed our entire walk of faith, is not only that *we fail to welcome and receive what we have been given*—our attention shifts to someone or something else. We can labour in the vineyard for years and still drift into resentment, routine, or quiet calculation. We may be faithful outwardly yet wonder: "Why is my life harder? Why do others have more with less effort?" When those questions take root, stewardship collapses—not because we stop working, but because we stop trusting. Our focus shifts from God's presence and grace to ourselves and the limitations of our heart.

Back to the story, the landowner answers plainly: "Did you not agree with me for the usual daily wage?" In other words: Was what I gave you not enough? Stewardship is not maximizing output or returns; it is about remaining faithful to what God gives now and finding ways to share even more. The early workers received a full day's wage in the vineyard, but by looking elsewhere they turned a gift into a curse.

When we see our work, families, friendships, and daily responsibilities not as places of divine encounters where grace unfolds, but as burdensome obligations to painstakingly endure, we lose sight of God's presence, love and action – not to mention of one another. Fellow labourers become competitors, burdens, or strangers, and we begin imagining that grace is elsewhere—in another hour, another calling, another life.



Grace, God's love, presence and action in and around us is located in the present call, in the here and now. This is deeply freeing. Stewardship is not constructing a perfect life of service; it is fidelity to the hour we are living—being present to the One who is ever loving, present and active in my life and surroundings.

When we are present to God, intentionally and loving, generosity follows abundantly. The vineyard is not abstract; it is here—in our parish, our homes, and the quiet responsibilities that fill our days. God places us beside one another with different gifts and burdens. Part of stewardship is receiving our own call and also recognizing, honouring, and making room for the call of another.

Being present to graces offered asks, “What is being asked of me right now?” rather than “How much should I give?”. We are moved not by comparison, but compassion; not by obligation, but love. The Master goes out repeatedly to call workers, marking the day with divine initiative. Each hour—early or late—spent in the vineyard is time with him, and no moment is spiritually insignificant as Gerard Manley Hopkins wrote: “The world is charged with the grandeur of God.”

To remain. To abide. To accept the hour given without comparison. To trust the Lord who calls us, even when we don't understand. This is the Gospel's quiet invitation today: return to the present moment and receive the concrete reality of your life again—not as something to measure, but as something entrusted. In the end, the wage is not the point. The gift is that we are invited to live, work, rejoice, give thanks, and love in the presence of the Lord and Master— in the end, he himself is the true gift.