

# ΟΙΚΟΝΟΜΟΣ

## STEWARD

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*People should think of us as Christ's servants, stewards entrusted with the mysteries of God. In such a matter, what is expected of stewards is that each one should be found trustworthy. It is of no importance to me how you, or any other human court, may judge me: I will not even be the judge of my own self. It is true that my conscience does not reproach me, but that is not enough to justify me. It is the Lord who is my Judge.*

1 Corinthians 4

“Stewards entrusted with the mysteries of God” is a most exact, and most noble, definition for the ministers of the Gospel. *Entrusted* should be read as strongly as possible: in an ordained person, the gifts of God are *ventured*, and in a real sense the man who is ordained holds the salvation of others in his hands. If he should damage, or lose, or misrepresent, or withhold these gifts, he will carry a heavy burden of responsibility. Paul speaks instead of *trustworthiness*, and warns that this is something mysterious, about which only God can make a final judgment.

I believe that near to the heart of good stewardship is the proper awareness of what lies under the steward's hand. To administer a great house, it would not do to appoint a man who could not tell a tin tray from a Tintoretto. To be *entrusted with the mysteries of God* means discerning faithfully and reliably, so that everything may be gathered in, and nothing be lost (*Jn 6:12*).

A longish course of study may feel like a series of testing high-jumps, which you would be glad to put behind you. This cannot be worthy of your vocation! You will need to study, think, absorb, illuminate, question, search, read, and deepen your understanding *for the rest of your life*, so that you can be a faithful steward.

The active component here is that word, *mysteries*; you don't pay the mysteries of God a fleeting visit in the study, and then become ordained, and thenceforward live a liturgical life, “handling at the altar the mysteries of God” (*Roman Missal*). The stewardship must be a continual watchfulness, visiting and revisiting the treasures of the Word and the Sacraments, and watching over *their deliverance*, whole and entire, *to the members of the household at the needful time*. You will often find you are delivering gifts whose meaning to their receivers far surpasses your own understanding of them. Humility, therefore, is essential to stewardship.

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He said, “Have you understood all of this?” They said, “Yes.” And he said to them: “Well then, every scribe who becomes a disciple of the Kingdom of Heaven is like a householder, who brings out from his storeroom new things as well as old.”