

God's Abundant Gifts

"We believe in one God" resonates on Sunday mornings as we recite the words of the Nicene Creed. Did you know that the word "creed" comes from the Latin "credo" and is translated, "I believe"? However, the word, "credo" is far more than assent to and belief in something, for it means I give my "self" to this; I embrace it with all my heart.

When one combines the principle of "I embrace this with all my heart" with the theology of God's abundant gifts to us, it's impossible to look at self, family, ministry, and even life itself from an idea of scarcity. The theology of scarcity refuses to embrace the abundance of God's gifts to each of us and lacks trust in God to provide these gifts. The theology of scarcity starts with self and my needs and stays there. In addition it often expands to using my gifts, whether skills or money or time, as a weapon or a bartering tool. One cannot embrace the Good News of Jesus Christ and live out of scarcity. The Good News will settle for nothing less than all my heart, my soul, my mind.

On the other hand, the theology of abundance looks upon God as the provider and giver of all things and seeks to use the gifts we have received from God in ways that reflect the glory of God and for God's purpose. It is true that we must also consider our personal and family needs in this approach, but it is surprising how readily our personal needs and those of our families are met when our perspective changes from scarcity to God's abundance. "Bloom where you are planted" is a popular motto and another way of looking at self, family, vocation, finances, spirituality, and health from the theology of God's abundance. The Apostle Paul was not driven by scarcity, "And God is able to provide you with every blessing in abundance, so that by always having enough of everything, you may share abundantly in every good work." 2 *Corinthians 9:8* In spite of hardship, beatings and imprisonment he continued to live the words taught by Jesus, "I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly." *John 10:10*

We are God's stewards at St. Martin's Church and that means have been called by God to live out of our abundance not scarcity. God will provide if only we continue to trust in God. Currently we provide a safe haven for AA and other groups, challenge and creativity through Yoga, fellowship and nourishment through our brunches and open and welcoming hearts in our worship. Are we finished reaching out?

We, the people of St. Martin's have been called by God to expand reach out by offering hands of friendship and welcome to the community in which we live. New creative programs can expand our willingness to provide a haven of safety, challenge, grace and peace, forgiveness and renewal. St. Martin's Church needs to continue to open its doors to new community programs that provide a safe haven and helping hand. St. Martin's Church also needs to be here for current and future members. God has called this church to do much and holds us accountable for it. Center your trust and peace in Christ and rejoice in the Lord always.

"Now to him who by the power at work within us is able to accomplish abundantly far more than all we can ask or imagine, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever. Amen" *Ephesians 3:20-21*

Fr. Al Jewson