

November 2015

My dear friends,

I would like to share a passage from *The Vision of Sir Launfal* by James Russell Lowell, written in 1848.

The Holy Supper is kept, indeed,
In whatso we share with another's need,
Not that which we give, but what we share,
For the gift without the giver is bare;
Who bestows himself with his alms feeds three,
Himself, his hungering neighbor, and me.

(Pt. II, st. 8)

In this poem, Sir Launfal was about to go out on a great quest to seek the Holy Grail, the cup that Jesus used at the Last Supper. But before he could start out he had a vision that showed him that the cup of Christ is not an artifact or relic to be sought and owned, but instead was a spirit of thankfulness and sharing that could only be found within his own home, his heart and his actions. The cup that he used to feed a poor man a drink was the cup of salvation. There was the glory that he sought. Launfal learned that it is in sharing that we all seek and serve Christ. It is in sharing that we become true servant leaders serving Christ.

Stewardship is about sharing our gifts and our gratitude. Launfal realized that the greatest gift that he could give to anyone was the gift of himself. We are called to commit to sharing our resources, our time, our talent, ourselves with St. James. It is an intensely personal and spiritual process to prayerfully recognize in gratitude all that we have been given and that our act of giving is simply *giving back*. Giving back to God, giving back to each other, giving back to the world.

The world puts a price tag on everything—that's the way it works—we all know that. God says we can't buy, we can't earn God's love. But we certainly can receive it and blessed are we that share it!

Your sister in Christ,
Mother Bonnie+