

# Stewardship

*How shall I make a return to the Lord  
for all the good done for me.  
(Psalm 116:12)*

## Stewardship insights

- ◆ It is about learning to live as Jesus taught us to live.
- ◆ Everything belongs to God: we are caretakers of those gifts.
- ◆ We must give back to God from our first fruits (from the top)
- ◆ It is in small actions and large actions. And about being surprised.
- ◆ It is in giving that we receive.
- ◆ Think of all of our actions in relation to God: how do we use all our gifts?

## Stewardship actions

- ◆ TO RECEIVE GOD'S GIFTS .....GRATEFULLY
- ◆ TO NURTURE AND TEND GOD'S GIFTS .....RESPONSIBLY
- ◆ TO SHARE GOD'S GIFTS.....JUSTLY/CHARITABLY
- ◆ TO RETURN GOD'S GIFTS.....ABUNDANTLY

## Stewardship as inclusive

- ◆ Garden of our body
- ◆ Garden of emotions
- ◆ Garden of the arts
- ◆ Garden of family/friends
- ◆ Garden of the "polis"
- ◆ Garden of money/supplies
- ◆ Garden of technology
- ◆ Garden of the globe
- ◆ Garden of history
- ◆ Garden of the soul
- ◆ Garden of decisions
- ◆ Garden of the mind

## A Stewardship parish

- ◆ The primary purpose of ministries is to help provide opportunities to serve.
  - ◆ Focus is not on getting a job done (and then we can go home) or some end result or success.
  - ◆ Focus should be on giving, and welcoming others to give.
- ◆ We gather our gifts together as parish and serve together.

## Stewardship as the conviction of others

- ◆ "Whatever is not given is lost!" (proverb from India)
- ◆ "What is not used is but a load to bear." (Goethe)
- ◆ "All belongs to the Lord." (Lev. 27:30)
- ◆ "Take only what ye need." (George Eliot)
- ◆ "All is gift-- give it away, give it away." (a poet)
- ◆ "Learn to give in the right way, at the right time." (Peck)
- ◆ "God has given me a gift and I have to use it." (Jones)
- ◆ "Unnoticed giving" must closely resemble God's goodness." (Boror)
- ◆ "A sense of gratitude is a primary source of joyful generosity." (Maurac)
- ◆ "All my trust is in your promise." (trust/faith as foundational elements in stewardship)

## Stewardship Thoughts

We learn to act as Jesus taught us.

How do we live our lives as a reflection of Christ's teachings? It is in the little things we do and in the big things we do.

It is the smile we give with a small tip to the server when we buy our coffee or lunch. We know the small gift will bring more joy to the receiver than it will jangling around in our pocket. The smile or the smile and the gift we give is our reward simply because we can give. When done joyfully and willingly we are rewarded. We feel good that we have brightened someone's day.

We reflect Christ's teachings:

- ◆ In the time we talk to a friend.
- ◆ In the response and manner in which we help a fellow worker who seeks our guidance.
- ◆ In the way we live our workday.

Stewardship reflects Christ in us and projects it to our world-- those we come in contact with.

Stewardship is also how we do the big, more difficult things. The money we give to a missionary to help feed someone we can't see.

The time we spend doing God's work for those less fortunate or less gifted. Our time is usually our greatest gift because in this era, the 90s, time is precious. Time spent in ministry work, time spent to help other reflect Christ.

The time we spend in prayer acknowledging the gifts we have.

The time we spend in prayer seeking God's guidance in his plan for us.

The time we spend giving thanks for others whose gifts complement our own.

The time we spend in prayer simply acknowledging God's love, feeling God's love, and showing God we love Him by spending some quiet time with Him.

To be a good steward is to be a good Christian. It includes all facets of our life, all the time. It is not difficult, but may be uncomfortable in some settings. Over time it gives us what we seek. Peace. Here is what Mother Teresa says about peace, what she calls The Simple Path:

The fruit of Silence is  
Prayer.

The fruit of prayer is  
Faith.

The fruit of faith is  
Love.

The fruit of love is  
Service.

The fruit of service is  
Peace.