

A Grateful Response

An Introduction to Christian Stewardship

ICSC October 5, 2020

A Stewardship Prayer

Lord, make me an instrument of your peace. Where there is hatred, let me sow love. Where there is injury, pardon. Where there is doubt, faith. Where there I despair, hope. Where there is darkness, light. Where there is sadness, joy. O Divine Master, grant that I may not so much seek to be consoled as to console, to be understood as to understand, to be loved as to love, for it is in giving that we receive, it is in pardoning that we are pardoned, and it is in dying that we are born to eternal life.

Stewardship:

- ✓ ...the grateful response of a Christian Disciple who recognizes and receives God's gifts and shares these gifts in love of God and neighbor.

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Introduction - Msgr. Thomas McGread

- ✓ A stewardship way of life is a thanksgiving way of life, living life as God intended it to be lived.
- ✓ It's not a program. It's a way of life. And this is really the biggest mistake many people make.
- ✓ Stewardship is not fundraising. Rather, it is about a total way of life, about changing peoples' minds and hearts.

A Stewardship Parish

- ✓ A stewardship parish, within the unique demographics of each, seeks through regular participation in the celebration of the Eucharist, to spiritually form the lives of its parishioners. Parishioners, in turn, are invited, encouraged, sent forward and given the opportunity to become actively engaged and involved. This invitation, opportunity, and involvement then tends to facilitate a real life experience and sense of hospitality, prayer, formation, and service within the parish community. - Wichita

Eight Characteristics of A Stewardship Parish

1. Parishioners have the opportunity to grow in union with God and one another, through the Eucharist, by liturgical worship, prayer, education, and service.
2. An active Stewardship Committee is in place.
3. Parishioners give proportionately, generously, and sacrificially of their time, talent and treasure.
4. A mission statement, pastoral plan and supporting structure are in place.
5. Stewardship education is ongoing.
6. There is an annual stewardship renewal and follow-up process in place.
7. Special fund raising needs, when necessary, are conducted within the definition, spirituality and context of the Church's teaching and practice of stewardship.
8. Planned giving (the stewardship of assets) and endowment awareness are promoted.

Standards: Msgr. Thomas McGread

- ✓ I noticed that people are looking for standards in life... If we're looking for standards in life we also must be looking for standards in our relationship with God...I realized there must be more to this idea of building a relationship with God. So that's when I came up with the idea that all of us have a certain amount of time in this world, and all of us have a certain amount of talents.

The Stewardship Way of Life: Fr. Ken Schuckman

- ✓ Stewardship is a way of life. It is not something we turn on and off. It is like breathing. Once it becomes part of our life it happens very naturally. Those who have experienced the true joy and peace of stewardship do not see stewardship as a burden but rather the only true way to live as Disciples of Christ. - Fr. Ken Schuckman

The Four Pillars of Stewardship: Prayer, Hospitality, Formation, Service

1 Peter 4:7-11

- ✓ Therefore, be serious and sober for **PRAYERS**. Above all, let your love for one another be intense, because **love** covers a multitude of sins. Be **HOSPITABLE** to one another without complaining. As *each one has received a gift, use it to serve one another as good **stewards** of God's varied grace.* Whoever **PREACHES**, let it be with the words of God; whoever **SERVES**, let it be with the strength that God supplies, so that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ.

oikonomos

- ✓ As each one has received a gift (*charisma*), use it to serve one another as good stewards (*oikonomos*) of God's varied grace. - 1 Pet 4:10
- ✓ *Oikonomos* – Steward
- ✓ *Oikonomia* - Economy of Salvation

The Lay Apostolate

- ✓ Since, like all the Christian faithful, lay persons are designated by God for the apostolate through baptism and confirmation, they are bound by the general obligation and possess the right as individuals, or joined in associations, to work so that the divine message of salvation is made known and accepted by all persons everywhere in the world (CIC no. 225).

- ✓ function in “more immediate cooperation with the hierarchy” and “pastors should confidently entrust the laity with duties in service of the Church” (AG, 21, *Presbyterorum Ordinis* (PO) 9).
- ✓ “allowing them freedom and room for action” (PO, 9)

3 Primary Motivators of Stewardship

- ✓ Mission
- ✓ Gratitude
- ✓ Faith

Stewardship is a Faith Response

- ✓ This way of life is by invitation only. – McGread
- ✓ If a person is not personally invited, they may wonder if they are personally wanted.

The Stewardship Way of Life

- ✓ A pastor needs to understand, stewardship as a spiritual awakening within his own parish, his own community, and his own life. - McGread

The Spirituality of Giving

- ✓ The spirituality of stewardship is the grateful acknowledgment that all is gift. - Gerber
- ✓ It all hinges on recognizing that everything we have are all gifts from God – our time, and our talents, and our treasure, even our very lives. - McGread
- ✓ There is nothing we have; nothing; that is not a gift. Everything we are and everything we have is founded in the loving generosity of the Creator. When we know this, not just in our minds but in the depths of our hearts, then life takes on a whole new meaning. Then we have a whole different perspective about our time or our talents or our treasure, our bodies, our minds, hearts – everything that we are and everything that we have – takes on a completely different perspective. – Bishop Carl Kemme

A Steward is Grateful

- ✓ One of them, realizing he had been healed, returned glorifying God in a loud voice; and he fell at the feet of Jesus and thanked him. - Lk 17:16

God cannot be outdone in generosity.

A Steward is a Christian Disciple

- ✓ Stewardship helps us to discover our vocation and live it, identify our personal dignity, and respect it, recognize God’s prompting and embrace it. - Gerber
- ✓ Stewardship begins with a conversion of heart. The true steward makes a commitment to the Lord – not merely to the parish. He gives His life to God because He wants to follow Him, and everything else – his time, his talent, and his treasure – follows suit. - McGread

A Steward Recognizes and Receives

- ✓ The steward's eye begins to see and recognize all that is good comes from God. – Lanzrath
- ✓ What do you possess that you have not received? 1 Cor 4:7

God's Gifts

- ✓ Too often de-spiritualized
- ✓ Natural gifts: talents
- ✓ spiritual gifts: charisms
- ✓ Grace does not destroy nature, but perfects it. – St. Thomas Aquinas
- ✓ Charisms are the kaleidoscope reality of the one Gift of the Spirit himself.
- ✓ The Holy Spirit always is in his essence the gift of God, God as the self-donating, so as the self-distributing, as **Gift**. - Ratzinger

Koinonia

- ✓ The root meaning of *koinonia* is a having in common, the sharing of common life. It can be used to describe an **intimate spiritual union** of persons,... [or] the **sharing of money and possessions**, which was one of the first results of the pouring out of the Spirit at Pentecost. - Smail
- ✓ A Steward Recognizes and Receives

cycle of giftedness:

- ✓ Gift given...
- ✓ gift received...
- ✓ gift accepted...
- ✓ gift transformed...
- ✓ gift shared

You cannot give what you do not have.

- ✓ *Nemo dat non quod habet*

Time, Talent, Treasure

- ✓ **Natural Gifts** are the root of **Charisms**, these are given as gifts that impart **life** and **love**, which is the root of **Koinonia**, which is built on the gifts of **Time, Talent, Treasure**.
- ✓ Only with His gift of life, with the rising and setting of His created sun, do we have the hours of each day to spend as we choose. Only with His gift of talents and skills that we cultivate and apply, are we able to work and play. Only with His bountiful generosity of these skills he creates in us, and the circumstances of life in which He places us, are we able to acquire the monetary income and material possessions that we have.

A Steward Shares

- ✓ Discipleship calls us to more than membership; it calls us to an active stewardship... Stewardship is an act of belonging and involvement. It is an act of recognizing God's providence to us and our obligation to manage it wisely. – PFA
- ✓ spirituality of sharing

A double dignity

- ✓ I have something to offer.
- ✓ You are worthy of sacrifice.

Generous

- ✓ Share with your neighbor whatever you have, and do not say of anything, this is mine. If you both share an imperishable treasure, how much more must you share what is perishable... Do not hold out your hand for what you can get, only to withdraw it when it comes to giving...Never hesitate to give, and when you do give, never grumble: then you will know the one who will repay you. - Barnabas

The Gift of Treasure

- ✓ You will never find a U-Haul behind a hearse. - McGread

We have a need to give. We do not give to a need.

Widow of Zarephath

- ✓ The jar of flour will not go empty, nor the jug of oil run dry. - 1 Kings 17:7-16

We give of our substance not of our surplus.

A Steward Loves God and Neighbor

Trinitarian Foundation of Stewardship:

- ✓ Stewardship is rooted in the relationship of the three Divine Persons. From all eternity the divine relationship of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are altogether mutual, reciprocal, and interdependent. From the very first God intended Adam and Eve and their descendants to be drawn fully into the communion which the three divine persons enjoy. The central teaching of the Greek Fathers is that the Christian life is not simply to make us better people, ethically upright, but to make us divine, to conform us to a participation in the life of the Trinity.

Personal Blessings

- ✓ You can't keep the rewards out of practicing stewardship any more than you can keep happiness out of virtuous living. - Gerber

Pope Francis on the Parish

- ✓ I would like to stress one thing: the parish remains valid! The parish must remain. It is a structure that we must not discard; it is the home of God's People. The problem is how the parish is organized!
- ✓ There are parishes... who scare people off. Parishes with closed doors... But there also parishes with open doors, parishes where when someone comes to ask a question, they are told: "Come in, make yourself at home, what can we do for you?" And someone listens to them patiently, because caring for the people of God requires patience; it takes effort!
- ✓ Managing a parish takes effort nowadays... The Lord has asked us to get a little tired, to work and not to rest... A parish is exhausting if it is well organized.
- ✓ The renewal of the parish has to be a constant concern... It has to remain a place of creativity, a reference point, a mother, where inventiveness finds expression. When a parish does all this, it becomes a missionary disciple, a parish that goes forth.

The Eight Fundamental Beliefs of Stewardship

1. ...everything we have received is a **GIFT FROM GOD** (i.e., life, love, health, talents, family, vocation, etc.), therefore we are called to develop and share our gifts sacrificially, generously and proportionally The Sea of Galilee
2. ...stewardship is primarily about **FAITH**. It is an invitation by God for the faithful in each parish to grow in a deeper relationship with Jesus Christ.
3. ...stewardship is a spirituality that builds **A WAY OF LIFE**, expressed not in a single action or even in a number of actions but in an entire way of life. It is a committing of one's total self to the Lord.
4. ...stewardship is characterized by **HOSPITALITY, PRAYER, FORMATION, AND SERVICE**.
5. ...our bishop, pastors, and parish **LEADERS** have a crucial responsibility to live stewardship and motivate the faithful to follow their lead in order for stewardship to be a spirituality that builds a way of life.
6. ...stewardship should be **INTEGRATED** into all aspects of parish and diocesan mission and ministry.
7. ...the **UNIVERSAL** Church, including parish and **DIOCESAN** missions, should be supported primarily by the generous, sacrificial, and proportionate sharing of time, talent, and treasure of parishioners to their parish.
8. ...we are called in scripture to return to God the **FIRST OF OUR FRUITS**, through our tithe.

Conclusion

- ✓ The Sea of Galilee or the Dead Sea