

Parish Stewardship Update

April 2003

Diocese of Rockford
Stewardship Development Office
555 Colman Center Drive
P.O. Box 7044
Rockford, IL 61125

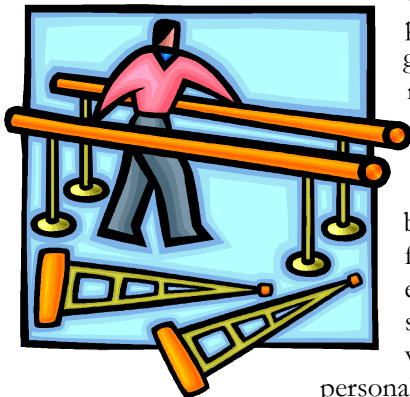
Phone (815) 399-4300
fax (815) 399-5657
Web Site: www.stewardshiprockford.com

Bob Pfundstein
Director of Parish Stewardship
e-mail: rpfundstein@rockforddiocese.org

Every Step Counts

Teaching Stewardship

We often hear about individuals who have made great strides in personal efforts. From Olympic athletes to persons with crippling disabilities, the conversations



usually turn to the process of reaching goals. For the athlete it might be shaving off a millisecond of time while for the person in rehabilitation it might be the movement of a finger or the blink of an eye. The journey is the same. Every step counts when you are looking at

personal victories. These personal goals also make progress in the goals of a parish community. Each parish supports the many individual parishioners who live life one step at a time.

Taken from the notes of an ICSC conference session entitled “Stewardship by Small Steps,” the following are ideas that can be implemented as individuals and as parish communities to understand stewardship more clearly.

As Individuals or Families

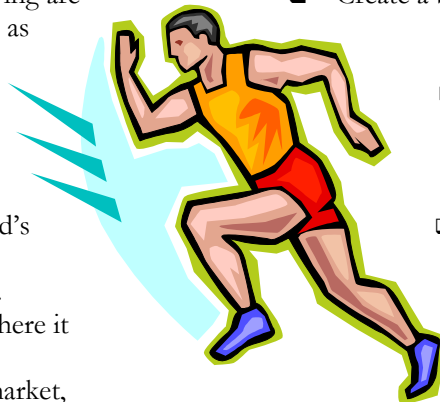
- ❑ Take your watch off when entering church for Mass to symbolize this is God’s time.
- ❑ Attend daily Mass at least once a month.
- ❑ Put a crucifix in your house in a place where it is visible to guests.
- ❑ Pray while standing in line at the supermarket,

for all those in the store, for all those who grow and process the food and for those who are hungry.

- ❑ Build a habit of thanking people whose work usually goes unnoticed – those who clean our business office, those who serve the food in fast-food restaurants, cashiers at the supermarket.
- ❑ Put a stewardship sticker on your credit card, to remind you that spending is not everything.

As a Parish Community

- ❑ Put a stewardship prayer in the front of the Missalette.
- ❑ If the office uses a postage machine, add a stewardship message to the printing. “Stewardship – A Way of Life” would look good on all the envelopes.
- ❑ Leave thank-you cards in the church and ask people to address them to people whose ministry might otherwise go unnoticed.
- ❑ Create a button that says “I’m a Steward for Christ” and ask ministry leaders to wear them regularly.
- ❑ Provide credit counseling for those in need.
- ❑ Ask the parish to recognize the gifts of the students in the parish.
- ❑ Include a simple “Stewardship Tip of the Week” in Mass announcements.
 - ❑ Each month, include in the bulletin a story of a saint whose life illustrates an element of stewardship.



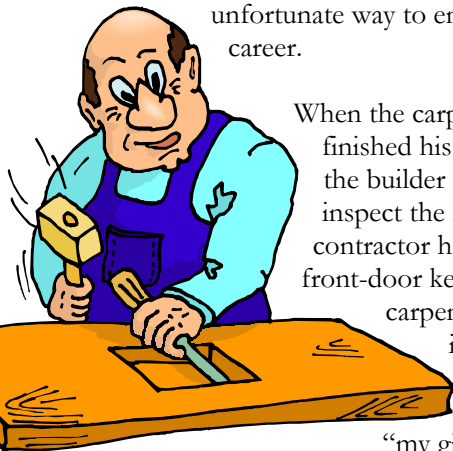
Good Stewardship ...

The Carpenter

A Stewardship Parable

An elderly carpenter was ready to retire. He told his employer-contractor of his plans to leave the house building business and give more time to his wife and family. He would miss the paycheck, but he needed to make the change. They would manage to get by.

The contractor was sorry to see his good worker go and asked if he would build just one more house as a personal favor. The carpenter reluctantly agreed, and it was easy to see that his heart was not in his work. In his haste to complete the job he cut corners and didn't take the time to find the best materials. It was an unfortunate way to end his career.



When the carpenter finished his work and the builder came to inspect the house, the contractor handed the front-door key to the carpenter. "This is your house," he said, "my gift to you."

What a shock! What a shame! If only he had known he was building his own house, he would have done it all so differently. Now he had to live in the home he had built none too well.

So it is sometimes with us. We build our lives in a distracted way, reacting rather than acting, willing to put up with less than the best. At important points we do not give the job our best effort. Then, with a shock, we look at the situation we have created and find that we are now living in the house that we have built. If we had realized that, we would have done it differently.

Think of yourself as the carpenter. Think about your house. Each day you hammer a nail, place a board, or erect a wall. So build

wisely. It is the only life you will ever build. Even if you live it for only one day more, that day deserves to be lived graciously and with dignity.

In The Spirit Of Giving...

A plaque says, "Life is a do-it-yourself project." How appropriate. Your life today is the result of your attitudes and choices in the past. Your life tomorrow will be the result of the attitudes and the choices you make today.

-Author Unknown

In stewardship we often speak about having an "attitude of gratitude." It seems that this type of attitude could have served the carpenter well. As we continue to grow older let's help each other grow in God's wisdom and in the wisdom of gratitude. This month, try to recognize in those who are older and wiser than us the power of a positive attitude. Thank someone who models this attitude in your parish and in your neighborhood. This is another small step in teaching others and ourselves about stewardship.

2003 International Catholic Stewardship Conference

October 5 – 8

In Chicago

Registration forms will be mailed to all those interested as soon as they are available.

Please contact our office to have a copy mailed.



Mark Your Calendar!

and Plan To Attend