

Parish Stewardship Update

August 2001

Diocese of Rockford
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A Pastor's Reflection

Revisited by Bob Pfundstein

One pastor in our diocese was considering the spirituality of stewardship and wrote the following reflection in his weekly bulletin. It was dated January 1994 so, as you will read, the message has been clearly stated for many years. Think about how you, your stewardship committee, your parish staff, and your pastor share the message with your parish.

Dear friends,

Our Parish, A Stewardship Parish
"WHERE YOUR TREASURE IS,
THERE YOUR HEART WILL BE."

Lk. 12:34

This month we reflect on the CONCEPT OF STEWARDSHIP. Since the inception of stewardship at our parish, new members have come into our parish family without knowing the faith story that brought us to accept this concept. We need to share and update our story so all of us have the same understanding of what we are about as a stewardship parish.

Our basic belief as a parish committed to stewardship is that ALL THAT WE HAVE IS A GIFT FROM GOD. As we grow in awareness and understanding that our talents, financial condition, health, etc. are gifts from God and not just the result of our efforts, WE DESIRE TO BE RESPONSIBLE STEWARDS OF THESE GIFTS. And in gratitude, we share with others a discerned portion of what our Heavenly Father has given to us.

Nest weekend we consider the stewardship of our treasure. Later in the Spring we will spend time reflecting on the stewardship of our time and talents.

STEWARDSHIP OF OUR TREASURE IS ALWAYS IN SOME WAY EXPERIENCED AS SACRIFICIAL GIVING. The portion of our gift becomes sacrificial when it comes from our substance rather than from our abundance.

SACRIFICIAL GIVING IS A PLANNED GIFT. It is a

decision to give a designated portion of our finances. This decision requires prayer, thought and time, so it is integrated with other financial decisions as part of a careful and intentional response to God's generosity.

SACRIFICIAL GIVING IS PERSONAL. Each person looks to god's inspiration to help determine what his or her decision should be. We act out of conviction That it is the Lord's desire that we participate in sacrificial giving.

SACRIFICIAL GIVING IS DEVELOPMENTAL. As we grow in our sense of gratitude to God, we grow in our spirit of sacrificial giving. Like most things in life, we grow by degrees in our understanding and commitment to the ideal.

Finally, SACRIFICIAL GIVING IS AN ACT OF FAITH AND TRUST IN GOD. Those committed to stewardship believe that God would not inspire them to practice sacrificial giving and the allow them to experience abandonment.

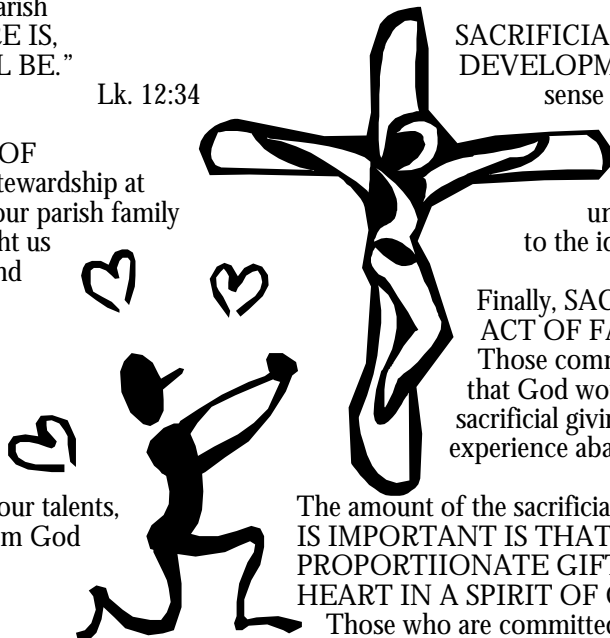
The amount of the sacrificial gift is not important. WHAT IS IMPORTANT IS THAT IT IS A DISCERNED, PROPORTIONATE GIFT GIVEN FROM THE HEART IN A SPIRIT OF GRATITUDE TO GOD.

Those who are committed to the idea of giving sacrificially and yet struggle in the journey toward a specific goal might consider a small step up in the amount of their current commitment – "taking a step" in a deeper walk of faith with our Lord.

May each of us, through prayer and discernment come to a deeper relationship with Jesus and an expression of that relationship in a grateful and giving spirit of shared treasure.

Peace, Joy and Love,

Your Pastor



**There is still time to register for the
*International Catholic Stewardship
Council Annual Conference*
in San Diego, California from
September 16 – 19. Contact the
Office of Stewardship Development
for more information and
registration forms. The registration
cost is \$450.**

**Keep your eyes and ears
open and register to
attend one of this year's
Regional Stewardship
Witness Workshops.**

**These workshops will be held in
five different locations around the
diocese and you are welcome to
come and bring at least one friend
to learn more about the process of
preparing a stewardship witness
talk for you, your parish or other
parishes. Call, write, or e-mail your
desire to attend or look for a
registration form in the mail.**

**Workshops will run from 7 – 9 pm
Locations and dates are:**

- | | |
|---------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Tuesday
August 28 | Holy Cross, Stockton |
| Thursday
August 30 | St Rita, Rockford |
| Tuesday
September 4 | St Mary, Woodstock |
| Thursday
September 6 | Sacred Heart, Sterling |
| Tuesday
September 11 | St Peter, Geneva |

**Parish Stewardship Day
2001**

**Is coming
To**

**Christ the Teacher Parish
In DeKalb**

**Mark your calendar for
Friday November 2nd
Or
Saturday November 3rd**

**Registration forms will be mailed
to all parishes and to all who
receive a copy of this newsletter. If
you think of someone who should
be receiving this newsletter and is
not, please contact us so we can
add him or her to our list. Thanks!**



Good Stewardship

As summer winds down, remember to share your abundance with others. Some of your cast-offs become necessities for those in need.

Send some of your parish or personal sharing stories so they can be published to inspire others who could use