

Parish Stewardship Update

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The Consistent Symbol

Sharing the Stewardship Story Annually

by Bob Pfundstein

We have often seen symbols of companies, organizations, and even churches that immediately remind us of that group. Some very well-known symbols are the U.S. Post Office eagle, the McDonald's golden arches, the Nike swoosh, and the Catholic crucifix. Each of these symbols tells us the story of the sacrifices that led to the development of these groups. "Through rain or snow, or dark of night..." the United States postal employees sacrifice to make their deliveries. Ray Kroc mortgaged his home and invested his entire life savings to become the exclusive distributor of a five-spindled milk



shake maker called the Multimixer, personally sacrificing for his beliefs and creating the fast-food chain we know as McDonald's. Bill Bowerman intended to make a lighter, faster racing shoe by pouring rubber into his wife's waffle

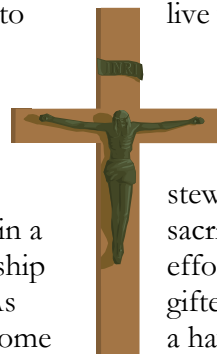
iron. Eventually, the glue fumes from these creative endeavors left him with nerve damage thus sacrificing his health in pursuit of creating the best equipment for his athletes at the University of Oregon and founding the Nike Company. Our Catholic Church teaches us about the sacrifice Christ made on the cross for the forgiveness of our sins. We are also taught about the sacrifice of God the Father in sending His only son to live with us and live for us. These messages have been consistently placed before us.



The idea of sacrifice is a consistent message in the Lenten season with a sacrificial lens on many of our activities. With that in mind, we should not forget to annually renew our stewardship efforts and allow our parishioners to share their time, talent, and treasure in a sacrificial way. As parishes, we should encourage all parishioners to continue their stewardship efforts not because the parish needs more but because God has gifted each individual. As gifted people, we need to become a haven of gratitude amidst the overwhelming consumer mentality of the "I want...", "I need...", "If only I had..." statements we often hear. The gratitude we have for our God-given gifts can change the language of our annual stewardship stories to become "I give because God has been so good to me."

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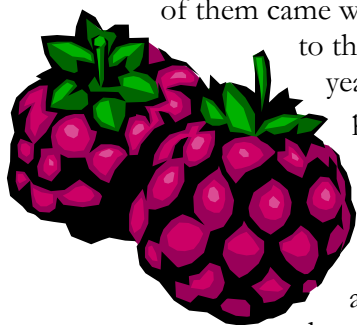
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Good Stewardship ...

Summer is a wonderful time to look around and see the beauty that God has prepared for us. It is a great time to be thankful for the ever-changing flowers, fruits, and vegetables.

All around our yard, the berries are ripening at a rate almost faster than my children can pick them. Recently, my second youngest went outside to play with his sister and a couple of brothers. While they were playing they decided to walk around and look for berries. Rather than go to the raspberry bushes or blueberry bushes that are in the planted area, they searched for the wild black raspberry bushes that have grown up near the perimeter of the yard. After a while, the four of them came walking by on their way to the house and my three-year-old son had his shirt



pulled up, creating a “shirt-basket” with his purple lips and purple round belly sticking out. When I asked him what had happened, he replied, “Nothing, I was just bringing some raspberries in to Momma.” He then turned down his shirt a little to reveal a good number of slightly “smushed” raspberries that he wanted to share with his mother. I couldn’t help but chuckle at his smile and his bright

In The Spirit Of Giving...

attitude of sharing. Perhaps we need to slow down enough to appreciate the goodness that surrounds us even in God’s wild untended garden.

Make some time this summer to send a note to a friend you have lost touch with. Mix up a batch of lemonade and invite the neighbors to sit and reminisce about their childhood. Share how you recognize God in the natural gifts surrounding you. The sky, the clouds, the sunshine, the rain, the green trees, the flowers, the birds, the bugs, the laughter, the tears, the friends, the family - all have a berth in God’s long list of gifts.

Keep the stewardship stories coming. Send some of your parish or personal sharing stories so they can be published to inspire others.

The annual **International Catholic Stewardship Council Conference** is coming to **Toronto October 27 – 30, 2002**. The registration fee is \$500 when registering through the Diocese of Rockford Office of Stewardship Development. If you would like further information regarding the conference schedule, speakers, location, or registration, please feel free to contact Bob Pfundstein at (815)964-6711. We would love to have you join us if you can.

Advent is Coming!

This would be a great time to order your copies of “Whose Birthday Is It, Anyway?” These are Advent booklets, celebrating the season and reminding us of alternative gift-giving ideas. Booklet orders are due at the Office of Stewardship Development by August 9th. This year the price per copy is \$0.75 plus the cost of shipping. Filled with ideas, prayers, and reflections, this resource has been used in the past by parishes as a bulletin stuffer or a direct mail insert to the pastor’s Advent letter. Order yours today!