

Parish Stewardship Update

March 2003

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The Gift of the “Other Disciple” Celebrating Lent

In their pastoral letter on Stewardship, the U.S. Bishops write about the call to discipleship and the cost of discipleship. Their letter is entitled “Stewardship: A Disciple’s Response.” When it comes to celebrating the wonderful season of Lent, we can look at our traditions and at the Gospel to draw us into a deeper relationship with Jesus.

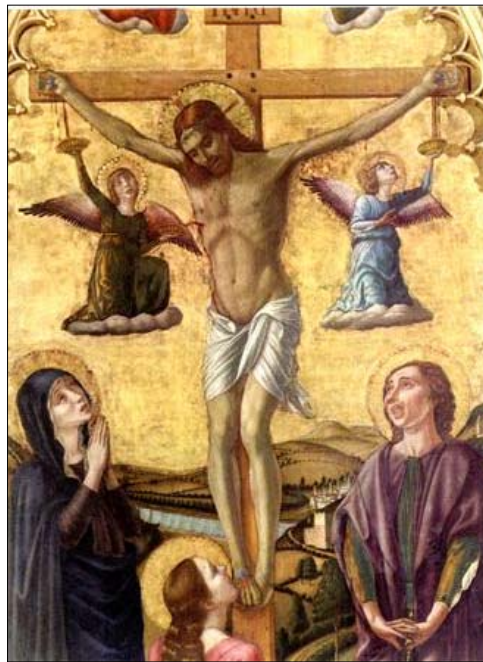
John’s Gospel refers to the “other disciple” or “the disciple whom he loved.” The gift of this unnamed disciple is that we can use this individual to help us grow in our own personal relationship with Christ.

If we continue to search for Christ in every individual we meet, the simple acts of human kindness can build our response as disciples of Jesus. Being present at a wake, bringing a meal to a family in need, listening quietly to a friend or acquaintance, spending time in prayer are all avenues to become the “other disciple.”

As the Gospel shows us, the other disciple sat next to Jesus at the Last Supper (John 13:23). Do we spend time close to Jesus in Eucharistic Adoration? Do we spend time with Jesus resting in his presence through prayer? Do we spend time with Jesus by serving those he loves, the poor and the disenfranchised?

The Gospel goes on to show that after Jesus is arrested, the other disciple helps Peter follow Jesus into the

courtyard (John 18:16). Do we help others to follow Jesus more closely? Do we invite those who know Christ to a more intimate relationship through our Church? Do we realize that what we say and do can become the entrance point to the faith journey for another disciple?



We again meet the disciple whom he loved at the foot of the cross (John 19:26) being present to Jesus’ mother Mary. Do we make ourselves available to those who are suffering losses? Are we willing to take personal responsibility to support others in need? Can we become family to someone who is not in our family?

Finally we meet the other disciple on Easter morning, racing to the tomb with Peter. Although he arrived first, he allowed Peter to enter. When he entered, “he saw and believed” (John 20:3-9). During Lent, are we preparing to race to the tomb? Are we willing to leave our personal agenda behind in order to see and believe?

Being a disciple does not have to entail being the first on the scene, or the one who has all the information. It happens in the ordinary and sometimes mundane tasks of everyday life. The “other disciple” gives us a model of being extremely close to Christ without being known. This Lent let’s celebrate by placing ourselves at the foot of the cross and preparing to race to the tomb to see and believe that Jesus is alive and present to us every day of our lives.

Summary of the Diocese of Rockford Stewardship efforts for 2002

Eight Characteristics of a Stewardship Parish

Summary Report
2002

1. **Stewardship Commission**
 - 55 commissions or advocates
2. **On-going Education**
 - 85 parishes
3. **Treasure Renewal**
 - 63 parishes total
 - 9 pilot parishes
 - 22 combined with Diocesan Stewardship
4. **Time & Talent Renewal**
 - 67 parishes total
 - 14 pilot parishes
5. **No Parish Second Collections**
 - 60 parishes
6. **Parish Tithes**
 - 62 parishes
 - Ranges from 1% to 10%
7. **Capital Projects**
 - Diocese begins approval of fund-raising firms using stewardship models
8. **Planned Giving**
 - 39 parishes have group or individual promoting planned giving
 - Catholic Legacy Symposium introduced
 - 9 wills/estate planning seminars

Good Stewardship ...

What does scripture tell us about a proper attitude for the Lenten practice of fasting, sacrifice and almsgiving?

*In The
Spirit Of
Giving...*

In Matthew's Gospel, Jesus says: *"When you fast, do not look gloomy like the hypocrites. They neglect their appearance, so that they may appear to others to be fasting. Amen, I say to you, they have received their reward. But when you fast, anoint your head and wash your face, so that you may not appear to be fasting, except to your Father who is hidden. And your Father who sees what is hidden will repay you."*

In Luke's Gospel, Jesus reminds us of substantial sacrifice in these verses: *When he looked up he saw some wealthy people putting their offerings into the treasury and he noticed a poor widow putting in two small coins. He said, "I tell you truly, this poor widow put in more than all the rest; for those others have all made offerings from their surplus wealth, but she, from her poverty, has offered her whole livelihood."*

St. Paul, in his letter to the Phillipians gives us a goal to strive for and perhaps another way to look at our Lenten efforts when he writes: *"...whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is gracious, if there is any excellence and if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things."*

2003 International Catholic Stewardship Conference

October 5 – 8

In Chicago



Mark Your and Plan To
Calendar! Attend