

Parish Stewardship Update

Office of Stewardship Development
(815) 964-6711
fax (815) 968-2808

Diocese of Rockford
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Web Site: www.stewardshiprockford.com

Bob Pfundstein
Director of Parish Stewardship
e-mail: parishstew@mindspring.com

What Gives?

Bob Pfundstein

April 15th has come and gone and many have completed their 2000 taxes. If you were one of the many who used the IRS Schedule A to itemize your deductions, what story did it tell of your giving over the past year? While it is only one of the indicators of the Stewardship of Treasure, it should help you to see in real dollars what percentage of your income you have given to charitable causes.

I know you may be thinking, there he goes again talking about money, but it is a necessary portion of your stewardship. A couple of months ago, I challenged you to consider tithing and almsgiving during Lent. Now that Easter Sunday has passed and we are celebrating the Easter Season, how have you been living out your call to discipleship through your finances?

If you accepted the challenge to tithe during Lent, I encourage you to review your finances for March and April. What you should recognize is not that you had any sudden surge in income but that you were able to give at that level and still manage to stay current with your other financial commitments. Remembering what we have all heard, stewardship is a way of life. It may be stated that stewardship is recognizing the gifts we have received from God and using them wisely. Using those gifts not just for our own benefit, but also for the benefit of many others who are served by our parishes and other charitable organizations to which we donate.

The financial amounts and percentages that you give are not the end result. The reason

for your giving is what becomes tantamount to any dollar amount. We are to be responsible stewards of all the gifts we have received. All that we have, all that we are, all that we have become, and all that we will become are to be used at God's service. This means many different things to many different people. It could be the mother at home with her children trying to raise them to become faith-filled adults; the father working two jobs to keep the house payments on time and food on the table; the priest striving to lead his parishioners into a deeper relationship with Christ; the parish staff member coordinating volunteers on a peace and justice commission; the literacy volunteer helping adults learn to read; the family picking up trash alongside a stretch of roadway. It could be you in all the efforts you do at home or at work to make your faith come alive and be connected to your everyday life. The church has always supported the dignity of life, of work, of the family, of you and me.

Take time this week to focus on your giving patterns. Whether you are a consistent percentage giver, or an inconsistent sometimes giver, ask yourself the questions: Does my gift represent who I am and who I have become? Does my gift represent my faith in Jesus who died for my sins and was raised on the third day? Is Jesus asking me *What Gives?*



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Parish Stewardship Day 2001

**Keynote by:
Bishop
Morneau**

**Two Choices:
November 2nd or
November 3rd**

**Christ the Teacher Parish
DeKalb**

Mark Your Calendars

Watch for additional information next month

Planned Giving thoughts...

- Between 2010 and 2030, the senior population (65 and over) will grow from 40 to 70 million, accounting for 20% of the population.
- As a group, seniors are estimated to control more than 50% of discretionary income in the U.S. and 77% of the nation's assets.

(Statistics taken from *The Good Steward* Newsletter published by Meyer Partners)

As parishes in the Diocese of Rockford, there will be a significant change in the number of older parishioners over the next 30 years. We need to face this growth with additional creative ministries to seniors.

As the senior population grows our parish pastoral councils, finance councils, stewardship commissions, education commissions and all other leadership groups need to have the appropriate representation from this change.

As the number of parishioners who understand the message of stewardship also grows, continue to review the Eight Characteristics of a Stewardship Parish and ask the Office of Stewardship Development for assistance in implementing stewardship in your parishes.

