

Parish Stewardship Update

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Diocese of Rockford

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Let the Preparation Begin

Stewardship Gifts Celebrating Advent

In the Spring of each year we often hear the questions, "What are you doing for Lent?" or "What are you giving up?" This Advent I would like to ask a similar question during your preparation time before Christmas. What are you giving away for Advent? How are you choosing to share the season with others?

While these questions are sometimes thought provoking, I would like you to consider the possibilities. Remember the person that you always feel obliged to purchase something for yet, you know they have no pressing need or want? This year could be the year that you give to others in that persons name. Give them the satisfaction of knowing that a family was fed in another part of the world for a month in their name. Let them know that a local homeless shelter was able to purchase five new sleeping mattresses for those truly in need. Or, perhaps let them know that a missionary in the U.S. is able to travel more safely because of the gift of new tires.

Preparing for the Christmas Season should be enjoyable. I think our society has put a real stumbling block in our way by making us think of ourselves and our wants above all else. The advertisers often sell us on why we need all of the "things" they have. They also tend to make it seem like we are less if we don't eat, wear, drive, or have the right "stuff."

John the Baptist is well known for

challenging the Israelites to "prepare the way of the Lord." I believe that his challenge extends to us beyond the Advent and Christmas Season, beyond the other special times of the church year and all the way down to the way we treat people on a daily basis.

Recently I overheard a conversation when a woman was talking to her husband and she commented that he always tried to say positive words to people, even those he didn't know. Later when I asked her what she meant, she indicated that her husband would go out of his way to strike up a conversation with the grocery clerk or the gas station attendant and thank them for the service they provided him. She went on to say that he did the same on the phone whether he was ordering a pizza or talking to a company representative about the phone bill. As she thought about it longer she said, if more people would treat each other with basic respect, there would be a great change in our world. I could not help thinking that this man's attitude was a gift and he was preparing others to pass that gift along.

As we prepare for celebrating Advent try to respect one another and get back to basic gift giving out of our deepest sense of gratitude for all that God has given us.

Good Stewardship ...

In The Spirit Of Giving...

In many parts of the country, winter means snow and ice and hazardous travel. Even the animals hibernate until spring. For all living things, winter's waiting seem to be a necessary part of the cycle, and important preparation for the growth to come.

How will we wait? What sort of stewardship are we called to in this season of long, cold nights? We can spend the time in front of the television or grumble and complain about shoveling our driveways. Or, we can:

- Write a letter to a shut-in
- Play a game with a child



- Help a child with homework
- Shovel the driveway of an elderly neighbor
- Make a new holiday recipe and invite the neighbors to join us



This winter, while others are making New Year's resolutions, let us resolve to review our stewardship of time, talent and treasure. What portion of each are we returning with gratitude to the Lord?

Source: Our Sunday Visitor

Share Your Gifts

“The Church today does not call us to be silent spectators to its mission; neither does the Church call us to pick and choose what is either pleasing or convenient. Rather, gifted as we are by reason of baptism and confirmation, we must be stewards of these gifts of ministry we possess.”

*The late Archbishop Thomas J. Murphy
September 1984*