



# INTERNATIONAL CATHOLIC STEWARDSHIP COUNCIL

## PARISH STEWARDSHIP NEWSLETTER

January, 2010

ICSC Committee for Parish Stewardship Education and Services  
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*Do you have material you'd like to submit for this newsletter? If so, please email it to [ParishStewardship@catholicstewardship.org](mailto:ParishStewardship@catholicstewardship.org). All submittals will be gratefully received, even if not all can be published.*

*Stewardship prayers\* to use at council, commission, or ministry committee meetings...*

#### **Stewardship of Time**

To you, Lord, we pray with praise and thanksgiving.  
You have given us everything we need, every gift we have.  
Help us to realize our most important gift, Lord –  
The time we spend with you.  
Help us to hear you in the Scriptures and meet you in the Eucharist,  
See you in the faces of those in our community,  
Love you in the people we love,  
And feel you in the time we spend with you in prayer.  
Create within us a desire to increase the time we spend with you,  
We pray in the name of your Son, Jesus Christ. Amen

#### **Stewardship of Talent**

We humbly thank you, Lord, for making us a people of purpose,  
The purpose of building up your body, the Church.  
We ask for wisdom to discern the special gifts  
That each of us has been given to serve you.  
Send us your Holy Spirit, Lord,  
And inspire us to give our individual gifts to the ministries of your Church,  
So that we might reach out to each other and the world  
With your hands, your mind, your heart and your love,  
Living as your disciples, a life of true Christian Stewardship.  
We ask in Jesus' name. Amen

#### **Stewardship of Treasure**

Good and gracious God,  
We give you thanks for the many blessings you have given us –  
For shelter, clothing, food, love, and abundance in our lives,  
And for our parishes which connect us so closely with you and your people.  
We hear your call to Stewardship, Lord.  
Give us generous hearts that we may respond by sharing our blessings.  
Give us courageous hearts that we may respond by living the Gospel message.  
Give us faith to believe in your goodness, so that with confident hearts  
we may return a generous portion of our monetary resources to you, oh Lord.  
We pray, with grateful hearts, through Christ, your Son. Amen.

\*Created by Kathy Clark, Archdiocese of Seattle

## STEWARDSHIP BULLETIN NOTES

from Dan Potvin, Archdiocese of Winnipeg



### **January 3 – Epiphany**

The word *epiphany* is secularly defined as, ‘*a sudden intuitive perception or insight into the reality [truth] or essential meaning of something.*’ Stewardship often becomes a way of life in an epiphany – a flash of insight that changes the way in which we view the purpose and meaning of our lives. Christ is the way, the *truth* and the light. The stewardship way of life means swimming against the tide of over-consumerism, rampant materialism, and selfish individualism, but we do so with the truth at our side.

### **January 10 – Baptism of the Lord**

Baptism is the Sacrament of Faith. We are called to continue to grow in our faith in the midst of a community of believers. Stewardship is a way of living out what we say we believe. This means that we are willing to share a generous portion of our lives and our possessions with God, with our faith community, and with the world. Vatican II points out that all the baptized are “*bound to show forth, by the*

*example of their lives and by the witness of their speech*” that **new life** they receive in baptism.

### **January 17 – 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time**

At the wedding in Cana, Jesus turned what would have been an embarrassing situation for the bride and groom into a glorious event. The servants trusted Jesus and did as He told them. Through our Lord, a miracle took place – transforming the ordinary into the extraordinary! Good stewards know that when they trust in God and step out of their comfort zones, their ordinary gifts can be transformed for extraordinary purposes.

### **January 24 – 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time**

There exists in our parish community a diversity of unique gifts. God has provided us with these gifts in order to advance His Kingdom. Our sisters and brothers in other Christian denominations have also been blessed with unique gifts that are being used for the same purpose. This week, the *Annual Week of Prayer for Christian Unity* comes to a close. We pray that throughout the year all Christians would be good stewards of their relationships, seeking to understand each other, being always patient and humble, and listening to one another, so that the Body of Christ may be truly united.

### **January 31 – 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time**

Here we are... one month already gone in 2010! What did you resolve to change this year? Stewardship calls us to change the way we think about who we are and what we possess. What changes in your life is God calling you to? Is it maybe to spend more time in prayer; are you feeling a need to share a more generous portion of your financial blessings; or maybe you sense a desire to respond to a particular call to use your gifts in the service of others?

Please feel free to reprint these bulletin notes in your bulletin.

Also, on the next page is a template bulletin insert that you may reprint for your parish bulletin.

# How to be a good steward

*(#2 in a series of bulletin inserts that focus on practical ways to recognize God as the source of all our gifts, to be grateful for those gifts, to cultivate them and use them to build up the kingdom, and to share and return a grateful portion of those gifts.)*

## Discerning what we would like to accomplish



### CONCEPTS & BENEFITS

“You are financially successful when financial matters do not dominate your life. That doesn’t mean you won’t face hard times or difficult problems... but the difficulties won’t translate into a different way of life.” – Bruce Howard, chairman & professor of Business Economics, Wheaton College

The attractiveness of things like the idealized life of traveling, higher education, or retirement portrayed in many current television shows, movies, and books is that they seem to involve unlimited, stress-free leisure time. But finding some of that leisure time for ourselves requires prioritizing what we want to do and planning accordingly.

### QUESTIONS

If you won the jackpot in the lottery, how would you use the money?

If you were able to quit working today, how would you use your time?

### ACTION STEPS FOR THIS MONTH

Figure out how much interest you paid on your credit cards last year. \$ \_\_\_\_\_

## Forming Good Stewards

by Deacon Jerry Martinez, Archdiocese of New Orleans

### January 3, 2010 – The Epiphany of the Lord

*“Where is the newborn king of the Jews? We saw his star at its rising and have come to pay him homage.” Matthew 2:1-12*

The Feast of the Epiphany originated in the Eastern Church and is celebrated in the Roman Rite as the Manifestation of the Lord to astrologers [Magi] from Persia [present day Iran]. The astrologers made the long and difficult journey to Bethlehem to pay homage to a newborn Jewish child. For us, the Feast of the Epiphany is another opportunity to reflect on the true meaning of the Birth of Christ – God Incarnate – and how He is manifested in our lives. It is an opportunity to ponder: During Advent and the celebration of Christmas, did we grow in our understanding and appreciation of God present among us? Did we make an effort equivalent to the Magi to present a gift to the Child Jesus – the gift of our time and a commitment to contribute more of our talents and resources to the mission of the Church through greater involvement in our parish faith community? If not, it is not too late. Those gifts abound in our lives. Are we willing to share them with others? Are we willing to manifest Jesus [make Him present] to others?

### Jan. 10, 2010 – Second Sunday in Ordinary Time

*“This is my beloved Son; with you I am well pleased.” Luke 3:15-16, 21-22*

Those are the words that a voice from heaven spoke after Jesus convinced John to baptize him in the Jordan River. Imagine how we would feel if a voice from heaven said to us, as we stood among our family and friends, and even our enemies, “This is my beloved child; with you I am well pleased.” We may not be standing in the Jordan River with John the Baptist pouring water over us, but we, who are baptized Catholics, are “children of God.” To the extent that we are doing our best to be all that God created us to be; to identify, accept, develop and use all of the talents, abilities and gifts that God has given to us for ourselves and for others, we can be sure that God is well pleased with us. And, if we are good stewards of our prayer life and truly listen for God’s will for us, we may not hear his voice with our ears, but we will know in our hearts that God is saying to us, too, “This is my beloved child, with you I am well pleased.”

### January 17, 2010 – Third Sunday in Ordinary Time

*“Do whatever he tells you!” John 2:1-11*

The Bible records four times when Mary speaks: At the Annunciation she concludes by saying, “May it be done unto me according to your word,” [20 words] Luke 1:34, 38. When she visits Elizabeth she proclaims the *Magnificat*, [125 words] Luke 1:46-55. Then Mary scolds Jesus for staying behind in Jerusalem, [20 words] Luke 2:48. Mary’s last words in the Bible are at the wedding feast at Cana. She says to Jesus, “They have no more wine;” then to the servants, “Do whatever he tells you!” [10 words] John 23:4. Mary is a woman of few words, [a total of 175 words recorded in the Bible]. But what powerful words they are. From “May it be done unto me according to your word.” to “Do whatever he tells you!” she gives us a model of faith, courage and openness to God’s will. She challenges us to listen to Jesus in prayer and to do whatever he tells us; to become all that God created us to be. What is such a “woman of a few words” telling us today? Probably: “Do whatever he tells you!”

### January 24, 2010 – Third Sunday in Ordinary Time

*“Today this Scripture passage is fulfilled in your hearing.” Luke: 4:21*

Jesus, his parents, and his grandparents lived in the small town of Nazareth that had a population of about 400 people and would have fit inside the physical boundaries on an average sized parish. In the synagogue at Nazareth, after reading a passage from Isaiah, Jesus declared “Today this passage is fulfilled in your hearing... The Spirit of the Lord is upon me because he has anointed me to bring glad tidings to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim liberty to captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free and to proclaim a year acceptable to the Lord.” How would you react if someone you know in your parish stood up and said that? Now imagine the speaker says to you, “The Spirit of the Lord is upon *you*...” and *you* have been sent to do all of those things. As a result of our Baptism and Confirmation the Spirit is upon us and we have an obligation to do all those things – and more.

### January 31, 2010 – Fourth Sunday in Ordinary Time

*“Isn’t this the son of Joseph?” Luke 4:22*

In his home town of Nazareth, Jesus read a passage from Isaiah that prophesied the coming of the Messiah. He closed the scroll and claimed it had been fulfilled in their hearing. They “all spoke highly of him and were amazed at the gracious words that came from his mouth.” But they instinctively realized that if Jesus, the son of Mary and Joseph, the carpenter, were truly the Messiah, he was destined to do great things. And, if he did great things, he might challenge them to do great things. He had grown up among them and was like them. They became fearful and agitated and tried to throw him off of a high cliff at the top of the craggy hill where Nazareth is located. From our youth we have learned about Jesus through the revealed Word of God. We have come to know him as the Messiah who did great things and who saved us by his death and resurrection. We know he expects us to be all that God created us to be. How do we respond? Do we try to throw Jesus over a high cliff? Or do we try to imitate Jesus and do great things?

## **Stewardship Practices from and for Catholic Schools**

by Mark Clark, Diocese of Rochester

The following are ways that various schools have taught stewardship and have promoted the practice of stewardship in Catholic elementary and high schools.

### **Integrating stewardship education and practices into the curriculum**

- Stewardship education is included specifically as part of the religious education program and curriculum.
- One elementary school has a full time stewardship teacher who rotates through the classes and spends one hour each week with each class – that hour is devoted to stewardship education and exercises.
- Christian service is an integral part of the graduation requirements at some Catholic high schools, and that service is presented as “stewardship opportunities.”
- Each elementary school teacher must attend an in-service program on stewardship and then follow a set curriculum in stewardship, devoting at least one hour a week to it.
- Stewardship education involves projects and service which includes the family members, especially the parents, of the students.
- Schools identify these three levels of stewardship and set specific goals for students as they move through the system:  
Knowledge – students are able to define and identify stewardship terms and language;  
Understanding – through speeches and essays students demonstrate that they comprehend what stewardship is and illustrate it with stories from their experience;  
Practice – students demonstrate good stewardship of time, talent, and treasure.

### **Providing stewardship leadership opportunities and experience**

- Some schools include students on the parish Stewardship Committee or Council.
- The school itself has a Stewardship Committee charged with identifying ways the school can become a stewardship school and offering opportunities for stewardship to students and their families. (In some instances, this committee operates in lieu of a Student Council.)
- If the school has its own committee, representatives of that committee report on a regular basis to the parish committee on the school’s stewardship efforts.

### **Recognizing and acknowledging good stewardship by students and teachers**

- On a regular basis, the good stewardship of individuals and classes is honored and communicated through newsletters, bulletin boards, and on web sites.
- Stewardship awards are given monthly (or sometimes annually) to deserving students.
- Students who are recognized as good stewards receive publicity outside of the school in parish and community publications.

### **Promoting the stewardship of treasure**

- All students have envelopes which they use at school Masses or at regular liturgies.
- To promote the stewardship of treasure, student collections are kept separately and the student Stewardship Committee decides how those collections will be shared.

#### **Save the Dates!**

#### **2010 ICSC Conference**

September 19-22, San Diego, CA

*(Watch for upcoming registration info!)*

#### **ICSC Parish Stewardship Institutes**

May 17-19, Arnprior, ON

November 1-3, St. Meinrad, IN