



INTERNATIONAL CATHOLIC STEWARDSHIP COUNCIL

PARISH STEWARDSHIP NEWSLETTER

February, 2010

ICSC Committee for Parish Stewardship Education and Services
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Do you have material you'd like to submit for inclusion in this newsletter? If so, please email it to ParishStewardship@catholicstewardship.org. All submittals are gratefully received, although we can't promise that all will be published.

Oops! We goofed! The article on Stewardship and Catholic Schools published last month was the work of Ed Laughlin, not Mark Clark. Sorry, Ed!

Save these important dates!

2010 ICSC ~~Conference~~:
September 19-22, San Diego, CA
(Watch for upcoming registration info!)

ICSC Parish Stewardship
Institutes:
May 17-19, Arnprior, Ontario
and
Nov 1-3, St. Meinrad, Indiana

A STEWARDSHIP PRAYER for TEACHERS & CATECHISTS

Loving God, we are listening. Speak Your words into the depth of our souls, that we may hear You clearly.

Leader: O Lord, You are our Father, we are the clay; You are the potter, we are the work of Your hands. (Isaiah 64:8). **Resp:** Deepen our capacity to share Your truth with those we catechize.

Leader: He commanded our ancestors that they were to teach their children; that the next generation might come to know... that they might put their trust in God, and not forget the works of God, keeping His commandments (Psalm 78, 5-7). **Resp:** In Your goodness, nurture the seeds of faith that grow within us. Help us to nurture the seeds of faith in others.

Leader: We who teach will be judged with greater strictness (James 3:1). **Resp:** Blessed are You Lord God, for the mission You entrust to us as teachers of your people.

Leader: Attend to yourself and your teaching; persevere in both tasks (1 Timothy 5:16). **Resp:** We offer You our gifts, which in reality are the gifts You have given use. Please continue to bless us with wisdom and insight.

Leader: Take as your norm the sound words that you have heard from me, in the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus. Guard this rich trust with the help of the Holy Spirit that dwells within us (2 Timothy 1:13-14). **Resp:** Give us all we need to be effective sharers of Your word and wisdom.

All: Lord, we thank You for bringing us together in Your name. We have come to speak and to listen, to pray and to share, that we may better understand the gifts and the tasks we have been given. May all our discussions and deliberations be guided by Your wisdom. And may all we do in Your name help to further build up Your Kingdom. Amen.



STEWARDSHIP AND THE SUNDAY READINGS

John Baumann M.Div.

(Responsible for guiding the development of stewardship at Our Lady of Guadalupe Parish in Seattle. John, a *Certified Pastoral Counselor*, divides his time between parish ministry and a private clinical practice and offers retreats and workshops.)

February 7th (from Isaiah)

“Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, ‘Whom shall I send? Who will go for us?’ ‘Here I am,’ I said, ‘send me!’”

This sure goes against the advice of not volunteering before you know what you are being asked to do. But then, stewardship does go counter this worldly norm. “Here I am, send me!” This statement carries with it the explicit and faithful belief that God walks with us when we say yes to God. Stewardship helps us encounter and live the reality that God does indeed walk with us.

February 14th (from Jeremiah)

“Blessed is the one who trusts in the Lord, whose hope is in the Lord.”

One claim of stewardship is that God has placed in our midst all the gifts, charisms, and resources needed to meet our particular responsibilities to be Christ’s presence in our community. Accepting this claim requires trust and hope. Stewardship provides a way to support each other in recognizing that what we offer through stewardship is enough: that when what we offer is joined with what everyone else offers, great things will happen.

February 21st (from Deuteronomy)

“Therefore, I have now brought you the first fruits of the products of the soil which you, O Lord, have given me.”

Offering to God the very best of what God has provided for us is at the heart of stewardship.

Do we offer the best of ourselves, or do we offer what is left over? Probably we’ve all done both, at one time or another. However, if we strive to offer our best, we will undoubtedly actually do this more times than not.

February 28th (from Gospel of Luke)

“While he (Peter) was still speaking, a cloud came and cast a shadow over them, and they became frightened when they entered the cloud.”

God was in the cloud and spoke, saying, “This is my chosen Son; listen to him.” How do we listen to Jesus as he continues to speak his message of loving our neighbor as we love ourselves and asks us to feed, clothe, shelter and provide comfort to those in need? We can join together in stewardship and help each other listen and act.

Stewardship resources for parish planning

Scripture suggestion – Jeremiah 29:11-14

For I know well the plans I have in mind for you, says the Lord, plans for your welfare, not for woe! Plans to give you a future full of hope. When you call me, when you go to pray to me, I will listen to you. When you look for me, you will find me. Yes, when you seek me with all your heart, you will find me with you, says the Lord, and I will change your lot: I will gather you together from all the nations and all the places to which I have banished you, says the Lord, and bring you back to the place from which I have exiled you.

Planning prayer

Good and gracious God, we thank you for the good work and good will of all who have gathered here today and of the many others who have helped to bring us to this point. Grant us vision, that we may see and use wisely the gifts you have showered upon us. Assist us with your Spirit, that this good work we have begun may come to completion in accordance with your will and in ways that best serve your people. Bless us now as we begin; and when we depart and go our separate ways, preserve our unity as your Church. We ask in Jesus name. Amen.

How to be a good steward

(#3 in a series of bulletin inserts developed by Scott Bader, Director of Parish Stewardship, Archdiocese of Seattle, 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.)

What Do I Have & How Do I Use It?

CONCEPT:

Acknowledging that we can't have it all or do it all, and then deciding which things are the most important to us, leads naturally to the 'B' word that so many of us fear – budgeting. (And not just budgeting our money, but our time as well.) Budgeting is really just defining and organizing our priorities so we have a road map to actually accomplish the things that are most important to us.

BENEFITS:

Peace of Mind: It wouldn't be good for us to have everything we want. It would foster a selfishness that could crowd God out of our lives. When we make a budget of our time and money – and include God, as well as our other priorities, in it – and learn to fulfill our wants with what's left, that is when we are learning to lean on and depend on God, and that is really what God wants of us.

QUESTIONS: Where Do You Spend Your Money & Time?

Money – (How much do you spend weekly in these areas:)

- Eating out (coffee, lunch, fast food, delivered food) _____
- Entertainment (shows, concerts, video/dvds/cds) _____
- Miscellaneous (barber, cosmetics, subscriptions) _____
- Gifts for others _____
- Church/Charitable contributions _____

Time – (hours/minutes you spend on these activities:)

- Watching TV _____
- Computer time (outside of work) _____
- With Others (family, friends) _____
- Entertainment/Relaxation _____
- Spiritual (Mass, prayer, reading scripture) _____
- Volunteer time _____
- Other _____



ACTION

If you couldn't answer these questions – or weren't happy with your answers – pay special attention and monitor how you are using your time and money in these ways during the coming week(s).

Please feel free to reprint this template – and any of the resources published in this newsletter – in your parish bulletin.

Giving gifts during Lent

James Lamm, Director of Stewardship, St. Louis Catholic Church, Austin, Texas

Christmas is the time most of us think about giving gifts. The three Magi in the Christmas story gave gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. These gifts represented the infant Jesus as God, as High Priest, and as the Sacrificial Lamb who died on the cross for us. During the season of Lent we are also called to give gifts. The gifts of prayer, fasting, and almsgiving are the traditional gifts of Lent. Unlike the gifts from the Magi, however, the gifts of prayer, fasting, and almsgiving are sacrificial gifts of ourselves, and therefore fitting gifts to our God.

Prayer allows us to be loved by God the Father. Prayer places us in the position to listen and to give God all that we are, our expectations and hopes. Prayer is a sacrifice of praise and intercession. The gift of prayer is the way we unite ourselves to Jesus and open ourselves to the Holy Spirit who makes all things new.

Fasting is a great spiritual tradition. Fasting represents the element of expectation of the Lord. It is the opening of the heart, stripping oneself of everything that is an obstacle to the gift of Christ's coming. During Lent, fasting represents being pilgrims toward the great gift of Easter. We must rediscover the need and desire for God as the center of our existence, emptying ourselves in order to be full of God.

Almsgiving is more than an act of giving; it is an attitude of the heart. It is an attitude of heart that is humble, repentant, merciful, compassionate, and which seeks to imitate with others the experience of mercy that each of us receives from our God. Almsgiving, therefore, is care, is discernment, is gift – all of these being part of what we have experienced as believers when we contemplate the love of God that accepts and forgives us.

During Lent we need to rediscover the value of sacrifice through the gifts of prayer, fasting, and almsgiving. A sacrifice is a gesture of love which costs something and is done in praise of God and for some one who is suffering and in need. There is no love without sacrifice, just as without love, sacrifice would be simply external restraint. Sacrifice is an offering of love. We must not forget the great example that Jesus gave us, and remember that “God so loved the world that he did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all. (John 3:16)”

You can tell a Stewardship School by its... *(by Rian Ross, Diocese of Rochester)*

Identity

- A Stewardship School has a strong sense of Catholic teaching and a strong understanding that Stewardship is the daily lifestyle that personifies those teachings.
- A Stewardship School is one that teaches that Stewardship must impact every aspect of a student's life as a servant leader and good Steward.

Leadership

- A leadership team comprised of students, faculty, staff and parents is in place to plan and implement aspects of Stewardship development and a wide variety of leadership opportunities.
- Students are taught and encouraged to take ownership and be accountable.
- Teachers and staff are seen as adopting a Stewardship lifestyle.

Community

- Stewardship is developed as a lifestyle that flows from school into home, parish and community.
- Activities are regularly provided which build and foster fellowship and the recognition,

respect, and value of individuals and their talents and gifts.

Education And Growth

- An attitude exists which celebrates successful Stewardship, while also addressing opportunities for renewal and recommitment.
- All curriculum and academic subjects are taught so as to support living a Stewardship lifestyle
- Students are encouraged to explore various possibilities in the identification of their talents.

Service

- Scriptural understanding of the role of “feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, and visiting the imprisoned” is taught, understood, and embraced as an integral part of the Stewardship lifestyle.
- Service is seen as an important part of the curriculum with opportunities and credit given for its successful completion.
- Students accept their role of spreading the Gospel as a principal point of service and ministry. Stewardship and Evangelism share a common goal.