



# INTERNATIONAL CATHOLIC STEWARDSHIP COUNCIL

## PARISH STEWARDSHIP NEWSLETTER

ICSC Committee for Parish Stewardship Education and Services  
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### Star Trek and Stewardship

by **Jim Lamm**, St. Louis Catholic Church, Austin, TX

I am not a Trekkie but do enjoy watching the *Star Trek* TV series and the movies from time to time. The other day I was watching the movie *Star Trek: First Contact*, which stars the cast from the TV series *Star Trek: Next Generation*. Without going into the whole plot, the 24<sup>th</sup> Century starship, Enterprise, is pulled back in time to the year 2063. I was struck by a statement the captain of the Enterprise, Jean-Luc Picard (played by Patrick Stewart), made to a woman of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century when she was overcome by the ship's size and technology and asked how much the Enterprise cost to build. Picard stated, "Money doesn't exist in the 24<sup>th</sup> Century... The acquisition of money is no longer the driving force in our lives. We work to better ourselves and the rest of humanity."

Who knew *Star Trek* was an example of stewardship in action? Can you imagine what would happen if we all followed Jesus' example and worked to better ourselves and the rest of humanity instead of increasing our own net worth? An earlier scene in the movie answers that question. The fictional scientist, Dr. Cochrane, the first human to travel faster than the speed of light in the year 2063, is informed that his first faster-than-light flight causes a passing alien ship of Vulcans to land on earth and make "first contact." He is then told this was a pinnacle moment in human history. Dr. Cochrane is told, "It [first contact] united humanity in a way no one ever thought possible when they realized they were not alone in the universe. Poverty, disease, war - they will all be gone in the next fifty years."

We are not alone in the universe. Two centuries before the first *Star Trek* book was written by Gene Roddenberry, God made first contact with us in the person of Jesus Christ. Jesus came to earth not as an alien but as fully God and fully human to teach us how to live for God and others instead of ourselves. It was *the* pinnacle moment in human history. The Apostles and early Christian Church lived their lives this way and freely shared their possessions, time, and talents in order to better themselves, their faith community, and the rest of humanity.

One man changed fictional history in a movie. One Son of Man changed actual human history by dying on the cross. We can be that pinnacle moment in our own lives and in human history. If we follow Jesus' teachings and use our skills, possessions, money, and lives to better the rest of humanity instead of ourselves, then we will indeed "live long and prosper."

### A STEWARD'S COLLECT

God our Father and protector,  
Without you nothing is holy,  
Nothing has value.  
Guide us to everlasting life  
By helping us to use wisely  
The blessings you have given to the world.

Touched by your hand our world is holy.  
Open our eyes to see your hand at work  
In the splendor of creation,  
In the beauty of human life.  
Help us to cherish the gifts that surround us,  
To share your blessings with our brothers  
and sisters,

And to experience the joy of life in your presence.

We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ Your Son,  
Who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,  
One God forever and ever.  
Amen.

## Forming Good Stewards

*Deacon Jerry Martinez, J.D., M.Th., Director of Stewardship for the Archdiocese of New Orleans*

**September 5, 2010** – Twenty-Third Sunday in Ordinary Time

*“Anyone who does not renounce all his possessions cannot be my disciple.” Luke 14:25-33*

“Ah, Jesus, can’t I just keep my IPOD?” Jesus might point out that He said *renounce* [from the Latin words *re* = back and *nuntiare* = tell, meaning: *To give up a claim, right, belief, practice, way of living, feeling, etc.*]. He might add, “You may use that IPOD, but you may not claim that it, or anything else you think you own, actually belongs to you. Everything you *think* you possess comes from God and belongs to God, who wants you to have what you need to enjoy life, but not if that means others must do without the necessities of life.” That is a hard concept for people in the United States, who cling doggedly to the right to property, to understand and accept. As stewards of all we have, God expects us to work out how much we need for ourselves and those for whom we are responsible, and how much we should share with others in need. So Jesus would probably say, “Enjoy My IPOD, and let others enjoy it too.”

**September 12, 2010** – Twenty-Fourth Sunday of Ordinary Time

*“I shall get up and go to my father and I shall say to him, ‘Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you.’”  
Luke 15:1-32*

It is important for parents to tell their children “I love you!” Parents nurture, protect and provide for their children during their early life, then become role models, teachers, and disciplinarians. That last role may cause a child to doubt the love of a parent. A young couple learned early in their marriage to tell their children “I love you” and to hug and kiss their children every day. Their children learned to respond. Later, when their sons were covered with dirt and sweat after a tough football game or soccer match or track meet, they searched out their parents to hug and kiss them and say, “I love you!” They were overwhelmed with love regardless of how they played or the outcome of the game. The parents, children, and now grandchildren, all hug and kiss and tell each other, “I love you!” They all know that they can go to each other and say, “I have sinned against heaven and against you, and I am sorry.” They know they will be hugged and kissed and told “I love you” no matter what they have done. That is true stewardship of Christ-like love.

**September 19, 2010** – Twenty-Fifth Sunday in Ordinary Time

*“Prepare a full account of your stewardship!” Luke 16:1-13*

Are we ready to hear Jesus say that to us? Here are some simple truths about stewardship you might want to keep in mind: A steward is a person who is given responsibility for the preservation and productivity of the property of another. The first question of a Good Steward is “For what am I responsible?” For disciples of Jesus Christ, being a Good Steward is not an option! It is an obligation of our baptism. A Good Steward is aware that everything we have and everything we ever will be comes from God and belongs to God. Good Steward is not a title – it is the way we imitate Jesus Christ! A Good Catholic Steward accepts responsibility for a constantly-growing Faith, a mature Prayer Life that is about listening to God, all of the Talents and Abilities and Gifts we have received from God, the welfare of our Community of Faith, and Evangelization –helping others find God. A true disciple of Jesus Christ will eventually hear: “Good and faithful steward, come, enter into My Kingdom.” Don’t we all hope to hear that!

**September 26, 2010** – Twenty-Sixth Sunday in Ordinary Time

*“If they will not listen to Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded if someone should rise from the dead.” Luke 16:19-31*

Those words of Jesus at the end of the story about the rich man who had more than he needed and Lazarus the beggar seem rather harsh. There is no gentle way to say that when we are dead it will be too late to do the good we should have done when we were alive. Unfortunately, when it comes to imitating Jesus we all have a little Scarlett O’Hara in us: “I’ll take care of that tomorrow!” We will get around to it. Try this exercise. Get a pencil or pen and a sheet of paper. Draw a circle. Take a pair of scissors and cut along the lines of the circle. Now write inside the circle the letters TOIT. You now have a Round TOIT. You no longer have any excuse for not imitating Jesus. That is, of course, unless you do not know Jesus. And whose fault is that? Here is another exercise: Pick up the Bible! Read it! You will learn what Jesus promised and that He rose from the dead. With that knowledge and your Round TOIT, you should be all set. Get busy imitating Jesus by loving God and your neighbor as yourself.

## STEWARDSHIP AND THE SUNDAY READINGS

Courtesy of John Baumann  
Our Lady of Guadalupe Church, Seattle



### September 5<sup>th</sup> (from Letter to Philemon)

“I did not want to do anything without your consent, so that the good you do might not be forced but voluntary.” Stewardship includes identifying the opportunities to live our baptismal call and the gifts or natural abilities that God has given us to exercise this call. When our gifts or natural abilities do not fit the ministry or opportunity, our response may feel forced. When our gifts or natural abilities fit the ministry or opportunity, we experience the joy of giving. Seek the joy.

### September 12<sup>th</sup> (from 1<sup>st</sup> Letter to Timothy)

“Indeed, the grace of our Lord has been abundant, along with the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus.” This abundance is among each of our communities and parishes today just as it was present to Paul. Do we take some time each day to reflect on where and how this abundance is found in our midst? Do we take a break from the busyness of our days so we might notice the beauty of God’s creation all around us? The stewardship of time is about offering our time to God. Carving out some time to reflect on how we feel and experience God’s presence is a wonderful stewardship of time.

### September 19<sup>th</sup> (from the Book of Amos)

“Hear this, you who trample upon the needy and destroy the poor of the land!” The prophet Amos lived in a time of prosperity. He denounces a “hollow” prosperity in which the call to use the gifts provided by God for the common good was not heeded. Eventually, Amos prophesies, this will lead to a downfall. Amos attempts to call Israel back to the high moral and social demands of Yahweh’s revelation. (See Catholic Social Teaching for modern day version of this call.) This is also the call of stewardship

### September 26<sup>th</sup> (from 1<sup>st</sup> Letter to Timothy)

“But you, man of God, pursue righteousness, devotion, faith, love, patience and gentleness. Compete well for the faith.” Stewardship provides a way to compete well for the faith. It provides a way to recognize that all we have is gift. We are to nurture the gifts we have been given and use them to build community. When we use the gifts we have been given in the spirit of righteousness, faith, love, patience and gentleness, we are living stewardship: we are competing for the faith.

### **A note about the content of this newsletter...**

This newsletter is assembled monthly by the members of the ICSC Committee for Parish Stewardship Education and Services. Good stewards share generously with us what they have produced for their parishes or dioceses and allow us to share it with ICSC members world-wide. Do you have material you’d be willing to let us include in this newsletter? Just email it to [ParishStewardship@catholicstewardship.org](mailto:ParishStewardship@catholicstewardship.org). Please know that although we are grateful for all submittals, we can’t promise that all will be published. This month, for example, we are grateful to Jim Lamm for both the Star Trek article on page 1 – and for a set of really good bulletin notices we just didn’t have space for!

Finally, we prepare and publish this newsletter for you to use. So please do feel free to reprint the bulletin notes, the bulletin insert template – and all other material in this newsletter – in your bulletin or other parish publications. Just remember that appropriate attribution is not only necessary, it’s good stewardship!

## Materialism

*(This page is part of series developed by **Scott Bader**, Director of Parish Stewardship, Archdiocese of Seattle, to help parents and children gain a greater understanding of stewardship and what it means to be a good steward.)*

### From the US Bishops' Pastoral Letter, *Stewardship, A Disciple's Response*

Our culture frequently encourages us to focus on ourselves and our pleasures. At times we can find it far too easy to ignore spiritual realities and to deny our faith a role in shaping our life and decisions. As Catholics in America, we know what it is to struggle against selfishness and greed.

### For Parents

Parents have a work of great importance. Within the family, they must introduce their children to the practice of stewardship – a challenging task in the face of today's widespread consumerism and individualism. Above all, it requires that parents themselves be models of good stewardship, especially by their selfless service to one another, to their children, and to their church and their community.



### Living Stewardship Together

Discuss together your family's lifestyle and patterns of consumption (including the use of television and other media). Do any adjustments need to be made in order to be more intentional stewards of God's blessings, to move toward consuming only what you need?

### For Children

At Christmas, birthdays, and other "gift-giving" occasions, we sometimes focus too much on all the things we want. Can you cut back on what you hope to get at those times, and focus more on how grateful you are for the things you will receive – and for the people who give you those gifts? It's good stewardship!