

FEARLESS GIVING!

-a letter to the parish from the 2010 Stewardship Committee

Stewardship is not just about giving money! It is more about our spiritual need to give, not the church's need to receive. And stewardship is not a church fundraising campaign; rather it is a personal discipline which leads to greater spiritual growth and health.

As we move into our stewardship season, a fundamental question always arises: how do we see our connection between God and money? God gives us many choices on how to use money. For some, we grasp money tightly, in order to secure our life and future. For others, money represents power and identity in our culture. For all, our relationship with money is a powerful force in our lives. Our stewardship should give us an opportunity to examine our relationship between our money and the Creator of money.

Recognizing these powerful forces, many are hesitant to give or to give much or, worse, we give what is left-over. A dominating fear underlying this hesitation is: "What if I give away too much?" The heart wants to be generous, but our emotions register fear. Somehow, we lose sight that God is the ultimate source of everything, including our security. Isn't it simply illogical to trust God with our eternal destiny but not our finances?

God does not want our stewardship to be limited by our fears - characterized by the "what ifs" of life. For some, developing a personal discipline of stewardship is never experienced and may appear to be impossible due to too much debt, ongoing financial commitments, or now, the "weak" economy. Leaning on these obstacles misses the point of stewardship. Thankfully, with God's grace, we do not have to stay where we are. Personal stewardship is about the act of organizing our life (slowly at first, but faithfully) so that God can partner with us and we can develop a trust and dependency in him. In this conversion process, the steward realizes the life-changing adventure of fearless giving, the universal experience of God giving back much more than we gave, and the much needed antidote for cultural materialism.

So, this fall, the real conversation is not how much money the church collects (although this is a seriously important measure of stewardship) but how a personal discipline of stewardship acts as a catalyst for spiritual transformation. This stewardship season, commit to taking a big step of faith - people can act their way into a new way of thinking. Act boldly by calculating a percentage of your income as a meaningful offering (not gift) to God. Make it your number one priority each month to make your offering. And remember: stewardship has its own rewards; if you really expect to be “rich” in both this world and God’s Kingdom, give sacrificially!

- 2010 Stewardship Committee

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