



A HAPPY
NEW YEAR

Stewardship News

Thoughts on Stewardship

(by Scott Bader, Archdiocese of Seattle)

HOW TO BE A GOOD STEWARD DISCERNING WHAT GOD WOULD LIKE YOU TO ACCOMPLISH

In the U.S. Bishop's Pastoral Letter on Stewardship, we are called to be "*mature disciples who make a conscious decision to follow Jesus no matter what the cost.*" One hallmark of mature disciples is coming to the realization that we can never have it all or do it all – and create a plan for what we *do* want to have and accomplish. But before we can create that plan, we need to do some discernment about what God would like us to have and accomplish.

BENEFITS

Some Rules for Happiness (from those who've studied what makes people happier):

- Don't define yourself by your possessions – someone will always have more or better possessions than you.
- There is little correlation between money and happiness – once people's basic needs are met, the correlation between money and happiness levels off dramatically.
- Being constantly and consistently grateful is one important way to make yourself happier. Dwelling on the good things in life – even if they are little, like a warm shower or chocolate chip cookies, will improve your happiness level.
- Studies show that devoting a lot of your time and money to things that bring short-term happiness – eating out, shopping, or expensive pastimes, for instance – won't bring long-term happiness.
- Having purpose or direction in your life is a primary way to increase your happiness.

QUESTIONS

- If you were stranded on an island and could take only 10 possessions with you, what would you take?
- If you only had one year to live, what would you do with that year?

PONDER

- To what extent are your answers influenced by your relationship with Jesus Christ and your faith?

- Thoughts on Stewardship
Page 1
- Stewardship and New Years
Resolutions
Page 2
- Engaging Young Parishioners in
Better understanding Stewardship
Page 3
- ICSC Stewardship Story of the Month
Page 3
- Prayer for the New Year
Page 4
- Upcoming Events
Page 4





Stewardship and New Years Resolutions

Appropriate for your parish bulletin

(Source: ICSC January 2011 Newsletter)

The practice of making New Year's resolutions goes back over 3000 years. The start of a New Year gives us the feeling of a fresh start, a new beginning, and new opportunities. It is a time when people feel that they can begin anew with their lives. Common New Year's resolutions are to lose weight, exercise more and eat healthier, or to spend more time with family. Still others include managing money better or being more organized.

Although there is nothing in the Bible or notable in Christian tradition about New Year's resolutions, many good stewards take advantage of this time of year to become closer to the Lord. They may re-commit themselves to pray more, to read the Bible, or to attend Mass more regularly. If you are looking for some help in your New Year's resolutions, here are a few ideas to get you started.

Practice gratitude: Cultivating a grateful heart is the hallmark of a Christian steward. Every day, express thankfulness to the Lord and to others. Seeing the good in your life will allow you to keep your heart compassionate and loving.

Encounter the Lord each day: Find time to be with the Lord each day, whether it be for an hour or ten minutes. Have a conversation with the Lord. Give your joys and worries to Him as well. Allow God's love to transform them. Our encounters will keep our eyes and ears open to the presence of Christ in our midst.

Be present to others: There is much celebration and mourning, joy and sorrow in people's lives. What a blessing it is to be able to share those times and not let others experience them alone. The gift of your presence to others is much more valuable than you realize.

Resist overwork: There is a pressure to produce, meet goals, be successful. But activities that lead us to overwork, constant fatigue and worry do not give glory to God. What God calls us to do we can do well. Be mindful that life requires balance, down time and letting go of unrealistic goals.

Nurture friendships: Our friends are those we choose to be with, those with whom we spend our evenings, with whom we vacation, to whom we go to for advice. Friends are gifts from God who give us a greater appreciation of God's love for us. Friends need our time and love.

Give More: Good stewards realize that everything they have is entrusted to them as gift to be shared. There is no better place to begin than sharing with the community that gathers around the Lord's table at Mass. Consider what you are giving to your parish and diocese and commit to an even greater contribution as circumstances allow.

Make a difference in your parish community: Believe it or not, your parish community can use your talents. Offering your talents to your faith community is one of the most effective ways to feel useful and connected to others, and it is a potentially life-changing New Year's resolution.

Consider living more simply: We cannot find fulfillment in possessions. They add nothing to our self-worth. Jesus blessed the "poor in spirit" in his Sermon on the Mount; and Saint Francis of Assisi urged us to live with only what was necessary, for that is how we begin to find God.

Don't give up: People give up their New Year's resolutions because of perfectionism and unrealistic expectations. So take it slow, be kind to yourself and keep trying. Resist the urge to throw your hands up and quit. You succeed through small, manageable changes over time.

Turn to the Lord: Ask the Lord for guidance, strength and perseverance in achieving your resolutions. In his letter to the Philippians, Saint Paul writes: "*I can do everything through Him who gives me strength*" (Phil 4:13).

If God is the center of our New Year's resolutions, they have a better chance for success.



Stewardship
A Way of Life



Engaging young parishioners to better understand STEWARDSHIP

How Parish of the Holy Spirit recently involved young parishioners with stewardship activities.

Helping children better understand the spiritual principles of stewardship: Time, talent and treasure, can be challenging and sometimes overlooked in parishes where the focus is primarily on the adults. All too often our youngest parishioners are positioned in a “twilight zone” of stewardship education.

Proactively involving children and youth in stewardship efforts is **very important**. Their participation can help them feel part of the church, enhance their understanding of personal stewardship and may inspire the adult members of the church.

In Grand Rapids, Parish of the Holy Spirit recently made a concerted effort to involve the parish youth in better understanding stewardship and what it means in their lives.

Activities were designed for the children and youth of the parish, including those in the Catholic school, religious education program, and Sunday school program.

Stewardship booklets were developed for three different levels with age-appropriate activities.

Preschool – 1st grade - A coloring book featuring the ABC’s of Stewardship

2nd – 5th grades – An activity book with crosswords and word searches that focused on Stewardship.

6th – 8th grades – Included much more text, information and illustrations on Stewardship, along with questions for reflection, a short Bible study, and activities to get students thinking about how they could be better/good stewards.

Poster Festival A poster festival was designed and the parish youth were invited to participate using a theme “**Stewards of the Spirit.**” The young parishioners were asked to create posters according to the theme, and to incorporate how God is asking them to be His stewards. The 8 ½ x 11 posters were mounted on colored foam core and displayed in the narthex area of the church. Parishioners enjoyed looking at the posters and seeing the different ideas of Stewardship from a child’s perspective. Not only did the young parishioners enjoy the fun activities designed specifically for them, they learned more about stewardship - AND so did the adults as they viewed the posters.



The ICSC Stewardship Story Of The Month

featuring a previous Director of Stewardship and Development for the Diocese of Grand Rapids.

The story highlights Stan Roth who was awarded a Congressional Medal of Merit for Seniors. Only one award is presented each year to a member of the Third Congressional District, which covers Kent, Barry and Ionia counties. Stan lives in Jenison, Michigan and worked for the Diocese of Grand Rapids as Director of Stewardship and Development for five years. Among his many responsibilities at the diocese, he coordinated the annual CSA and conducted annual stewardship conferences for clergy and lay leadership throughout the diocese. This month, ICSC is recognizing Stan for the stewardship he exercises in his humble and unassuming manner. The Grand Rapids Diocese Office of Stewardship and Development offer our congratulations for his award and Stan’s continued commitment of furthering stewardship within the diocese. Click here to link to the ICSC web-site and full article. <http://www.catholicstewardship.org/en/index.cfm>

Upcoming Events

CONTACT:

- **February 16, 7:00 PM: Stewardship Networking Evening**—Cathedral Square
- **March 19, 8:30 AM to 1:30 PM—Parish Stewardship Day**— Holy Redeemer Parish, Jenison. Special guest speaker, Robert Pfundstein, Parish Stewardship Director for the Diocese of Rockford, Illinois

Office of Stewardship and
Development

Mark Morrow

Interim Director

360 Division Ave S

Grand Rapids, MI 49503

Phone: 616-475-1251

E-mail:

mmorrow@dioceseofgrandrapids.org

A Prayer for the New Year

If your parish does not have a special prayer to place in the bulletin for the New Year, consider the following prayer.” Source ICSC Newsletter www.catholicstewardship.org/en/index.cfm

A PRAYER FOR THE NEW YEAR

*Loving and merciful God,
You are the Lord of
new beginnings.
You sent us Your Son so that we
may begin anew
and enjoy new life in Your Spirit.
We ask you to bless this new year,
to guide and direct our plans,
and to show us how to find the
resources necessary
to carry out these plans.
Give us the wisdom to take advantage
of opportunities
we may have to help and
serve others,
to bring peace to the hearts of
those who are troubled,
and hope to those who suffer.
Help us approach this new year
as good stewards of your
abundant gifts,
with an awareness of your
daily presence,
and the obedient spirit we need to
be your faithful servants.
We ask this in Jesus' name,
Amen.*

