



Characteristics of Catholic Stewardship

Catholic stewardship can be identified by several meaningful characteristics, according to *Stewardship*, a national newsletter

written by Parish Publishing:

- Catholic stewardship provides spirituality that the lay person can take home from church, exercise at work and express through personal involvement in the community and church.
- Catholic stewardship successfully bridges the material world around us and the world of the Spirit within us.
- Stewardship enables Catholics to measure the extent of their faith in and love of Jesus by the kind and quality of the stewardship they perform.
- Stewardship gives joy! Those who voluntarily give their time and abilities for work in the parish and community will always experience joy if they give them for Christ. They are not, however, guaranteed freedom from frustration.
- Stewardship is not job-oriented or project-minded. It is a way of life for a lifetime.
- Catholic stewardship takes a positive view of money. It sees money not only as a medium of exchange but as a symbol of the person who has it. The way we acquire it, use it, and share it, we are revealed in those actions.
- Catholic stewardship helps us to become aware that God is the ultimate giver of the gifts we have. To give to God should be from the top—not from what may be left over.
- Stewardship teaches Catholics to be concerned about where and how to share their parish financial overflow. Stewardship is not giving just to meet the budget needs.

Jesus Christ is God's greatest gift to us. Stewardship tells us to share a portion of our time, talent and treasure so that the Gift, Jesus Christ, may be given to those who do not know Him.

Stewardship— Not a matter of chance

Stewardship involves intentional, planned and proportionate giving of our time, talent and treasure. The following further explains this concept:

- **Intentional** - A deliberate decision is made to live out the Catholic life in a certain way. That way is to thank God for all His blessings by returning to Him a portion of our time, talent and treasure.
- **Planned** - At the beginning of every year, each Catholic household in the diocese plans and makes stewardship of time and talent a part of its lifestyle and stewardship of treasure a part of its budget.
- **Proportionate** - A decision is made to give a certain percentage of one's time and one's income to the church and other charities.

Giving of time involves being with God in prayer and worship, sharing our love with family and friends, and volunteering our time in church and community activities that help others and promote justice.

Sharing our talents arises from the fact that God has given each of us the ability and gifts to do certain things well and we are to develop those talents for the good of others. Many individuals commit a certain number of hours each week to prayer and charitable activities.

Giving of our treasure is equally as important as giving of our time and talent. Since God does not hold back on any area of His giving, so we are not to hold back on any area of our giving, especially in the crucial area of supporting our parish, diocese, Catholic schools and community organizations.

Motivation for Giving

Gratitude	Giving out of gratitude is the motivation for true stewardship. I recognize that I have been blessed by God, and I return to God a portion of the time, talent and treasure out of gratitude.
Sacrifice	Giving out of sacrifice recognizes that we often have to give up some things in order to give back. While this is true and good, if sacrifice is our only reason for giving, it often results in a grudging giver. God wants a cheerful giver!
Need	Giving to meet a need works well in an emergency situation, but once the need is addressed, the giving stops.
Recognition	Giving for recognition puts the entire spotlight on the giver...a one-sided focus. True stewardship benefits both the giver and the receiver.
Reward	Giving for a reward is selfish giving. If there is no reward, then there is often no giving.
Guilt	Giving out of guilt only produces the grudging giver. I do whatever I am "guilted" into doing, but I am not at all happy about it!