

# The Vineyard



A quarterly publication from the Development Office of the Archdiocese of Milwaukee funded by the *Catholic Stewardship Appeal*

## Stewardship Monday through Friday

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Each week many Catholics spend 40 or more hours working and approximately 1 hour worshipping. It's easy to see that living a stewardship way of life must mean more than attending church once a week, then returning to "real life" until the next Sunday. As disciples of Jesus we are called to be faithful stewards in all parts of our life, including the workplace.

Among the gifts God has given each of us are our co-workers and customers. Instead of thinking about their jobs as a necessary evil; something that takes them away from developing a deeper spirituality, good stewards try to see God in all of their daily pursuits and interactions.

Here are some small steps that can help each of us feel God's presence and live as faithful stewards in the workplace:

- Set a prayer to come onto your computer screen when you start work.
- Pray silently while at the copier... pray in thanksgiving for your success and for the intentions of your coworkers.
- Say thank you to another employee who has, by his or her good work, made your work easier or better.
- Build a habit of thanking people whose work usually goes unnoticed; fast food servers, gas station cashiers, the building maintenance crew, bus drivers, the "mail person".
- Choose a time once a day when you can enjoy a moment of stillness and quiet contemplation.

**Taking one or two of these small steps will open a new "compartment" in your life so that your faith can shine in!**



choose  
joy

"As with all things pertaining to the Gospel, stewardship is fundamentally the work of the Spirit in our lives. When we accept our lives as sheer gifts, the Spirit can use us as apt instruments for spreading the Gospel. Wherever the Spirit works, there is joy.

Stewardship, then, is all encompassing. It is, ultimately, the pull and the power of the Gospel come alive in our times and circumstances."

**Stewardship: A Disciple's Response**

**U.S. Bishops' Pastoral Letter on Stewardship**

## Be a Good Steward of Thanksgiving Day



Have a wonderful, blessed Thanksgiving!

Almost everyone has one or more Thanksgiving day traditions that they hold dear. Everything from grandma's heirloom tablecloth to mom's famous stuffing to the family touch football game comes to mind.

Thanksgiving is also a wonderful time to start new traditions that reflect our gratitude for the bounty God has entrusted to us.

Here are some suggestions for making Thanksgiving day even more special by living out the call to live as good and faithful stewards:

- **Go to Mass and count your blessings.** In your prayer, reflect on the five things you are most grateful for in your life. Then, reflect on how you can be an even better steward of these gifts.
- **Write "I'm thankful for you" cards** and give them out on Thanksgiving day. E-mail works too!
- **Share your Thanksgiving meal** with someone who is alone this year. Look for someone, such as a neighbor, co-worker, fellow parishioner, college student or armed services personnel who may be separated from family and
- **Help someone if you can.** Extend your generosity and blessings beyond your own family. Be part of an adopt-a-family effort, help distribute food baskets or serve dinner at a shelter.
- **Take a walk.** Find a place to enjoy God's gift of creation. Invite family, friends or others to share the experience - and the wonders of nature.
- **Most importantly,** take advantage of the Thanksgiving holiday to focus on what you are grateful for and the things you appreciate about yourself and others. Remember the Source of these gifts.

## Thanksgiving Never Ends

*"A Christian steward fosters a thankful heart year-round."*

Life is a gift. Every Day. Every Minute. Every Breath. Offering thanks for our many gifts not only honors God, but also reminds us of the source of our temporal and spiritual goods.

For the Christian steward, Thanksgiving occurs more than once a year in November. Gratitude is a state, a response, a grace. We are, however, often creatures of habit. So many of our abundant blessings we take for granted. Yet we all like to be thanked.



Almighty God, in gratitude we praise you for your boundless glory and thank you for your abundant gifts and graces. Grant us hearts buoyant with thanksgiving. This we ask in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

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## Psalms of Praise and Thanksgiving



The Thanksgiving season is an excellent time to rediscover the psalms of praise and thanksgiving.

When you find a quiet moment, relax with your bible. Think of a time when awe and gratitude overwhelmed you. Maybe it was a sunrise, an inspirational hymn at church, or a gazing at a sleeping child. Remember how you appreciated that special moment, then open your bible to one of the psalms of thanks-

giving and recite it to yourself. Listen to the words. Close your eyes, and let the psalm speak to you.

Take, for example, Psalm 118: "Give thanks to the Lord for he is good; his love endures forever."

Other psalms of praise and thanksgiving that you might consider include psalms 92, 95, 98, 100, 103, 104, 105, 107, 105, 107, 111, 117, 145 and 147.

Whatever psalm you choose for that quiet moment, thank God for that special time of awe as well as all the good things in your life, and praise God for his goodness.

Excerpted from the International Catholic Stewardship Council November 2012 e-bulletin

## Oh...and thank you, Lord, for the gift of my *Parish*.

It's that time of year when we begin to focus on the gifts we have received, and the gifts we intend to give. When we think about blessings present in our lives, do we remember to say "thank you" to God for the gift of our parish communities? Do we consider the teaching, the healing and comforting we receive through practicing our faith together? Do we ponder the joy of celebrating Mass joined as people of God?

Through our parishes and their ministries, we are there ministering to those in need,



### Slowing Down for Advent

*The Advent reflection below was originally written in December of 2009 by Stephanie Daily, then a parishioner at St. Mary Parish in Menomonee Falls. It was shared in a previous issue of The Vineyard, and I received so many wonderful comments about Stephanie's thoughts that I am reprinting them below.*

*I am sure that those who remember the piece will gain new insights, and those who are reading it for the first time will appreciate this heart-felt, family-focused reflection.*

*Stephanie's advice; slowing down to appreciate the season, resonates with us all.*

*This Advent season I once again had high hopes of slowing down the pace of life in our family and taking time to reflect on what it is we are all truly waiting for during Advent -- the coming of our Lord Jesus. I had wanted to do so much to prepare -- attend the Advent Prayer Service, have an evening routine of reflecting on a bible passage telling the story of the Lord's birth, making a home-made advent wreath with my*

*educating children in the faith, celebrating with families and individuals through the sacraments, visiting the sick and homebound. Our parishes give us the gift of being part of something greater than ourselves and the knowledge that we have a place to connect with God and with each other.*

*If we take the time to really think and pray, it's easy to see what a gift belonging to a parish really is. It is also easy to see why sharing resources with our parishes falls into the category of giving **and receiving**. Our parishes are the conduit; the channels fed by our sharing*

*children, to name a few ideas. I wanted to be sure my children did not see me stressed out about holiday shopping, cooking and the like, but rather a mother focused on the "reason for the season". As I sat in Mass last weekend and realized that the second candle had already been lit I wondered how I was living up to the plan I had made, for in fact, I had barely had a moment to sit in quiet since the start of Advent.*

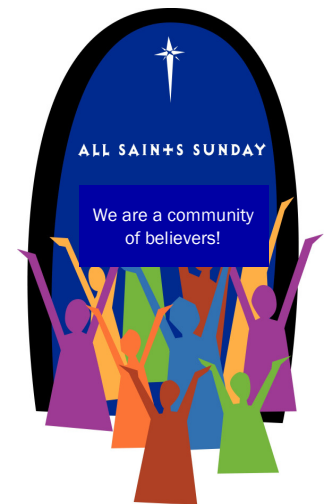
*As is the case for many of us with busy families, Advent has been filled with multiple trips to the doctor, days upon days spent at home with one sick child or the next, and at times a feeling that the winter ahead will simply be unbearable -- closed in doors with four boys who physically can not be too close to one another for any length of time, too much stuff (treats and gifts) arriving in the home, and a to-do list that never ends. As I reflected, I was disappointed at myself that I was sidetracked with my everyday responsibilities that seemed to fill my days. I was in survival mode and not Advent mode!*

*which, in turn, make it possible for us to be in places near and far ministering to those in need and spreading the good news.*

*Consider adding this prayer to your conversations with God:*

*"Oh...and thank you, Lord, for the gift of my parish. It brings me closer to you, and it brings me closer to my brothers and sisters in faith.*

*Help me to support your work, through my parish community, by sharing my time in prayer, my talent in ministry and my financial resources in proportion to my ability." Amen*



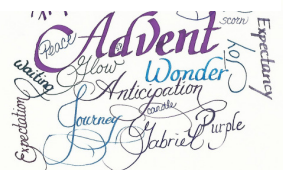
*Then, last weekend our pastor related the Gospel story from Luke that stated, "the word of God came to John the son of Zechariah in the **desert**". He reflected on the fact that God comes to us when we are in the desert of life - the desert for each of us has a different face to it -- some more challenging than others.*

*For the first two weeks of Advent I felt a little like I was in the middle of the desert. Looking back, God was with me all along in the desert. In fact, there were so many opportunities that I minimized where God was with me and where He was simply waiting for me to slow down and see Him more clearly -- from the spontaneous discussion with my children about who St. Nicholas really was, to teaching my son about the grace one receives from the sacrament of Reconciliation, to talking about and praying for the family we will adopt this Christmas.*

*These conversations were taking place amongst organized chaos most times, and this was all part of my Advent journey,*

*even though it did not look the way I thought it should.*

*For the last weeks of Advent I would love to participate in the gift basket program for our seniors, attend the parish Christmas concert and the Advent Reconciliation service as a way to continue my faith formation. But, I know life will continue to move at fast pace and there will be many things that come up out of my control. As a family we are going to try and remove some of the societal pressures and let the valleys and gorges in life be filled by God instead of all the extra stuff life brings. As the end of last week's Gospel reads, "Every valley shall be filled and every mountain and hill shall be made low. The winding roads shall be made straight, and the rough ways made smooth, and all flesh shall see the salvation of God." **Luke 3:5.***



# The 3 “Cs” of Successful Stewardship Stewardship Committee, Comprehensive Plan

*Is your parish in the process of establishing a new stewardship committee? Do you have a committee looking for a place to start, or an established committee looking for fresh ideas? No matter where your parish is in its stewardship journey, The 3 “Cs” of Successful Stewardship, will provide information, tools and techniques to support your parish stewardship initiatives.*

*One of the key elements of the presentation will be a discussion about communication techniques, methods and sample tools to help inform and engage your parishioners, including news about an exciting new opportunity – the parish app. Other topics will include an overview of the functions of a stewardship committee and its relationship to evangelization. There will also be an opportunity for sharing between parishes.*

*This seminar is a wonderful opportunity for pastors, stewardship committee members, pastoral and finance council members and other parish leaders interested in strengthening parish life by developing and strengthening a culture of stewardship.*

## Dates and Locations

<b>Tuesday, November 10th</b>	Archbishop Cousins Center
<b>Thursday, November 12th</b>	St. Anthony on the Lake Parish, Pewaukee
<b>Tuesday, November 17th</b>	St. Francis de Sales Parish, Lake Geneva
<b>Thursday, November 19th</b>	Holy Family Parish, Fond du Lac

**Each session will run from 6:30 to 8:00 PM**

For more information, contact Barb Vite, Parish Stewardship Director, at [viteb@archmil.org](mailto:viteb@archmil.org) or (414) 769-3331. To register, go to <http://www.archmil.org/offices/parish-stewardship/3CsSuccessfulStewardship-Registration-Form.htm>

## **New Resources Now Available**

Two new formation brochures have been developed to help parishes communicate a holistic vision of stewardship. Each brochure has a unique message designed to help parishioners focus on the fullness of what it means to be good stewards.

The “*Embrace Joy*” brochure focuses on how parishes become joyful communities of believers who embrace stewardship as a way of life; including the nine most important aspects of a successful stewardship parish.

The “*Faithful*” brochure speaks to our covenant relationship with God, and our response to his invitation to take an active role in building his kingdom.

Beginning November 1st, both brochures, along with complementary pieces including prayer cards, self-reflection exercises and sacrificial giving brochures can be found in the “tool box” on the parish stewardship page of the archdiocese website, [archmil.org](http://archmil.org).

