



The Vineyard

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In this issue

Trick or Treat Stewardship

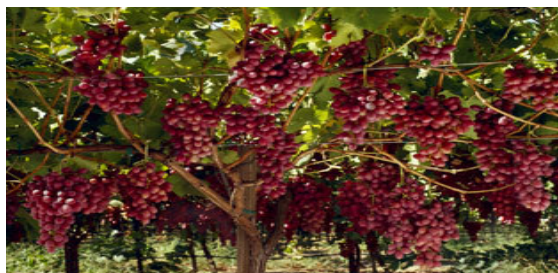
On October 31st, little goblins, superheroes and princesses descend upon our doorsteps seeking treats and goodies. If we think about it, our relationship with God is sometimes like that Halloween tradition. We, like children, eagerly come to God's doorstep when we want something. We come to God for blessings, requests of help for ourselves or someone else, for strength in times of trouble, and, most importantly, for the gift of Jesus Christ in the Eucharist at Mass. All of these are available to us if we but knock at God's door. But are we to be merely like children who continually ask for more without ever thinking about God's will for us and the gifts He gives us?

If our relationship with God is based solely on our asking and God giving, we are like the neighborhood children coming to our door asking for candy. There is no relationship. God is always at the door waiting for us to knock. He wants to give us love, joy, faith and blessings. However, God's gifts come with a purpose and a responsibility. God does not give us His gifts just to keep to ourselves. He gives them to us to be shared, and shared abundantly, with others. With love and generosity the gifts are given, so with love and generosity they are to be shared.

As we stand at the doorstep of God to receive His gifts, we are to receive them graciously, cultivate them responsibly, share them with others in love and justice, and return a fitting portion back to God with gratitude. If we do this, we are no longer just neighborhood children knocking on God's door, but truly His sons and daughters.

Adapted from the October 2013 ICSC parish newsletter

- THE GIFT OF MY PARISH
- UPDATE COMMITTEE INFORMATION
- A WEEK OF STEWARDSHIP PRAYERS
- STEWARDSHIP READING RESOURCES



To be a Christian disciple is a rewarding way of life, a way of companionship with Jesus, and the practice of stewardship as a part of it is, itself, a source of deep joy. Those who live this way are happy people who have found the meaning and purpose of living.

*Stewardship: A Disciple's Response
U.S. Bishops' Pastoral Letter on stewardship*

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

At this time of year many parishioners are being asked to focus on the gifts they have received, and the gift of financial support they intend to give to their parishes. 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?



As society has changed over the years, so has the landscape in our parishes. While times, and the way we interact as Catholics may be different than in the past, the heart and work of our parishes remains the same as it has always been - building the kingdom of God.

Through our parish “organizations” *we are there*; reaching out to those in need, educating children in the faith, celebrating with families and individuals through the sacraments, visiting the sick and homebound. Our parishes give us the gifts of being part of something greater than ourselves and of knowing that we have a place to connect with God and with each other as a community of faithful disciples.

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 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.

“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

Calling All Committees!

As part of our efforts to expand our communication capabilities, the Development Office is updating our Stewardship Committee Contact list. We want to share this newsletter, along with resource updates, seminar announcements and other pertinent information with every parish stewardship committee member. Please take a moment or two to update the contact information for your parish stewardship committee roster .

Go to <http://www.archmil.org/Stewardship-Contact-Update.htm> to input or update your committee contact information.



Help us spread the good news!

A Week Of Stewardship Prayers



MONDAY

Loving God, I come to you in thanksgiving, knowing that all I am and all that I have is gift from you. In faith and love, help me to do your will.

I am listening, Lord God. Speak your words into the depth of my soul, that I may hear you clearly.

I offer to you this day all the facets of my life, whether it be at home, at work, or at school – to be patient, to be merciful, to be generous, to be holy.

Give me the wisdom and insight to understand your will for me and the fervor to carry out my good intentions.

I offer my gifts of time, talent and possessions to you as a true act of faith, to reflect my love for you and my neighbor.

Help me to reach out to others as you my God have reached out to me. Amen

TUESDAY

Lord, time is Your gift to us. Help me to be a good steward of this precious gift by spending it in ways to which You call me;

Listening to You,

Learning about You,

Knowing You,

Being with You.

May my stewardship of this most precious gift show my love for You. Amen

WEDNESDAY

Generous God, I give you thanks for the gifts you have given me - my life, my family, my fiends, my talents and my material possessions. All that I have comes from You. Help me to remember this and to rejoice in Your goodness.

Walk with me, my God. Help me on my spiritual journey, so that I may constantly renew my relationship with You and all the good people in my parish and my community.

Renew in me Your Spirit. Give me the strength and courage to become a better follower of Jesus; to become a true disciple. Help me hear Your call to, "Come, follow me". Help me, Lord, as I strive to make stewardship a way of life. Amen

SUNDAY

Where should I begin, Lord, to unclutter my life? I have yielded to temptation and filled my days with more commitments than I can comfortably manage. Help me to make myself a little less busy. *Free my time.*

I have crowded my space with too much baggage; with gadgets and conveniences and possessions. Help me to let go of whatever I cling to. *Free my hands.*

I have filled my head with trivial distractions; news and weather, gossip and prejudices. Help me to focus on more important concerns. *Free my mind.*

Jesus, my life is cluttered with more idols than I realized. I have given them a reverence they do not deserve. Teach me to renounce their claim on me, and end my divided allegiance. Guide me to a simpler life and more generous service. Amen

THURSDAY

My church is composed of people like me - I help make it what it is.

It will be friendly, if I am.

Its pews will be filled, if I help fill them.

It will do great work, if I work.

It will make generous gifts, if I am a generous giver.

It will bring other people into its worship and fellowship, if I invite and bring others in.

It will be a church of love and faith, if I, who make it what it is, am filled with these same things. Lord, help me to dedicate myself to being all the things that I want my church to be. Amen

FRIDAY

I resolve to trust God more, believing that in His wisdom and abundance, He will give me what I need.

I resolve to spend more time with God, giving a few more minutes of each day to prayer, worship and spiritual reading.

I resolve to find more ways to share my unique skills and talents so that my special strengths will make a difference in the world.

I resolve to give a generous share of my treasure to God's work here on earth, giving from the first fruits of my labor.

May my faithful stewardship bear witness to the love of Jesus Christ in my life. Lord, help me be firm in my resolve. Amen

SATURDAY

Lord God, You alone are the source of every good gift, of the vast array of the universe, and the mystery of each human life.

Everything I am and everything I have are Your gifts, and after creating me You have given me into the keeping of Your Son, Jesus Christ. Fill my mind with His truth and my heart with His love.

In the name and spirit of Jesus, I commit myself to be a good steward of the gifts entrusted to me, to share my time, my talent, and my material and spiritual gifts as an outward sign of the treasure I hold in Jesus. Amen.

Stewardship Reading Resources

Stewardship: A Disciple's Response ISBN 978-1-57455-465-6

United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB)

Available on the USCCB website www.usccb.org

rebuilt: The Story of a Catholic Parish ISBN (print) 10 1-59471-386-3, 13 978-1-59471-386-6

Michael White and Tom Corcoran ISBN (E-book) 10 1-59741-387-1, 13-987-1-59471-387-3

Available from Ave Maria Press www.avemariapress.com

The Gratitude Factor ISBN 978-1-58768-063-2

Charles M. Shelton, PhD

Available from Hidden Spring (an imprint of Paulist Press) www.hiddenspringbooks.com

Excellent Catholic Parishes ISBN 0-8091-3992-8

Paul Wilkes

Available from Paulist Press www.paulistpress.com

Catholic Stewardship: Sharing God's Gifts ISBN 0-9707756-4-4

Colleen Smith

Available from Our Sunday Visitor Publishing www.OSV.com

Time, Talent & Treasure: Reflections on the U.S. Bishops' Model for Parish Stewardship

C. Justin Clements

ISBN 978-0-76-48-1500-3

Available from Liguori Publications www.liguori.org

Why Catholics Don't Give...And What Can Be Done About It ISBN 13 978-1-59276-261-3

Charles E. Zech

Available from Our Sunday Visitor Publishing www.OSV.com

Stewardship: A Parish Handbook ISBN 978-0-7648-0662-9

C. Justin Clements

Available from Liguori Publications www.liguori.org

All publications listed are also available on Amazon.com