

# “SHARING”

**The pastoral letter says that a steward is someone who shares God’s gifts lovingly and in justice with others. Through a focus on sharing beyond our parishes, we encourage our parishioners to give to the wider community.**

Stewardship is certainly not meant to be confined to the Parish. We are called to consider our giving to our whole community – a connection to our mission as Christ’s disciples to transform the world. This is how we share our gifts in love and justice – as the pastoral Letter calls us to.

Venues for emphasizing the spirituality of stewardship at prayer and worship include:

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## **Other Half Giving**

Remind parishioners that special collections are part of our stewardship.

Too often parishes treat special collections as just another burden and as another entity trying to reach into our parishioner's pockets. Rather, these are opportunities for our parishioners to share in the exciting work of the diocesan, national, and universal Church.

Use the special collection as an occasion to reinforce the ideal of stewardship, be accountable (each of the directors responsible for the special collections in the Archdiocese has additional information on the collection if you desire), and put a face to the collection. For a great article that elaborates on these points at America, go to [http://americamagazine.org/content/article.cfm?article\\_id=1199&s=2](http://americamagazine.org/content/article.cfm?article_id=1199&s=2). Also, encouraging parishioners to budget ahead of time, including for the special collections, helps to emphasize the stewardship aspect.

## **Giving a Percentage of Parish Income Outside the Parish**

Stewardship encourages parishioners to see their giving of money as a way of expressing gratitude to God for what they have been given. The giving of money to the parish, to the poor and other charities, is a concrete way of putting our Christian beliefs into action. Our giving should be planned and in proportion to our own income and is something we do first with our money rather than last. The parish is putting its money where its mouth is.

In order to model good Stewardship, the leadership of each parish should designate a percentage of its income to programs or charities on the local, regional, national and international levels. This will be a way of expressing gratitude to God as a parish community and will be a concrete way of reaching beyond itself to help the poor and those in need. Just as it is said that people have a need to give, perhaps a parish also has a need to give outside itself, otherwise it could become too centered on its own needs. Parishes that have chosen to do this have found that their own needs are in better perspective.

## **Parish Day of Service to the Community**

Taking a 'cue' from entities like United Way, the Points of Light Foundation, and Habitat for Humanity, some parishes have begun an annual (or more frequent) Day of Service.

Parishes are selecting one or several local charities and organize a day for parishioners to volunteer and give time. Some projects have included making blankets, cleaning up the yards of elderly and infirm, helping with Special Olympics, etc.

Certainly, before doing this, the parish should be in touch with the charity to develop a plan. The Parish Stewardship Commission could organize these efforts.

Some suggested days:

- Martin Luther King Day

- Presidents Day

- Columbus Day

- Other civic holidays

- Good Friday or other religious holidays

These choices would give additional meaning to the holidays, should be easier to gather volunteers, and might give new community service insight to both the charity and the volunteers. This is a great way to promote stewardship.