

Hello, my names is Leonardo Orozco and this is my wife, Sandra Orozco, we have been married 16 years and have three children, Valeria; Leonardo and Fernando. We have been members of this parish for 6 years and we would like to share with you our testimony of how stewardship has changed and brought happiness to the life of our family.

What is Christian stewardship? To be honest, I couldn't understand the concept, I looked for the meaning and tried to understand it better. I found that being a steward is to answer God gratefully for everything He has given to us.

That's how I remembered, without knowing, stewardship was transferred to us from our parents. In my case, I remember my mom and dad used this phrase: "if you don't live to serve, you don't serve to live". They also motivated us to be of service and contribute whatever was needed in our home, church and community, sharing our time, talents and treasure. I acknowledge that we have not always been Christian stewards in our marriage, at the beginning we only attended Mass, but were not aware of the need in our lives of sharing our talents with the Church and others. When our children were born, we worried about them receiving their Sacraments; faith was important, but God was not the focus of our lives, He was second.

Thanks to some catechist topics presented here at St. Alfred, when I brought my children to the Religious Education, I began to realize of the great lack of God in my family and of the need we had of sharing with the church and the community the gifts God gives us. I began praying and asking God and the Blessed Mother to help me and teach me in what way my family and I could practice stewardship with others, because I didn't know how or where to start. God listened to me and He didn't take long to respond. When I least expected, the Religious Education Director asked me to help as catechist aide when I brought my children to the catechism; my first reaction was to say no, I didn't want such a commitment, because in my daily routine I didn't have enough time, she insisted and convinced me. I served as catechist aide for two years, this helped me to see life in a different way, I realized that I was able to manage my time better and share it with others. Trust wasn't easy, because I was afraid that by serving outside my home, I would neglect my family, but God doesn't miss anything, and thanks to Him, my husband supports me and my children usually can be with me and participate. I experienced spiritual growth, I realized how blessed I was sharing my time and talents, this motivated me to prepare to serve as a catechist. Then, I was asked to take over as the catechist to prepare children for their First Communion. It was something that I wasn't expecting, but has been one more blessing, this is my third year preparing the children. During this time, I was also invited to collaborate in the nest of prayer that is Armada Blanca and accepted with happiness because I firmly believe in the great power of praying the holy rosary and even more when children pray it. In addition, I have witness many changes in my family thanks to this practice. Now I have begun serving as Youth Group coordinator and it fills me with a lot of enthusiasm and joy.

Thanks to our awareness of the importance and need of stewardship in our lives, we have also motivated our children to give time, talent and treasure in the church and community; now they serve as altar servers, lectors and help wherever they are needed.

Being a good steward with our time and talents is important, but it is also important to contribute our treasure. Offering our treasure to the church has become important for our family, not only because there is a need inside the church, but also because it is a way of offering to God the fruits of the work He gives us and allow us to do during the week. Additionally, we want our church to be sustainable, so that our children and their children will have the blessing of a place where they can go to Mass, grow in faith and worship God. We hope to be able to contribute even more of our treasure, not only to the Church, but also to whoever needs it; because as Christians we are called to help others.

Being stewards has changed our lives, we have become aware that all we have comes from God. While it is true that we put in work and effort, it is a gift from the Lord because he gives us the opportunity. We should be grateful for all we receive and should share our gifts and the fruit they produce, it is better to give than receive. By sharing we do the work of God here on earth and become instruments of His love, as the prayer of St. Francis of Assisi.

I confess stewardship is not easy, but nothing in this worthwhile life is; selfishness and our weaknesses often win over us, it takes a lot of prayer and trust in God to be a good steward.

Finally, I invite you to reflect if we are you are being stewards of your time, talent and treasure within our Church and community, if you give generously or only give what you have left over. Please join us and consider making Christian stewardship a part of your lives.

Mr. and Mrs. Leonardo and Sandra Orozco