

We are Christian Stewards

March 9, 2014 is Stewardship Sunday here at St. Patrick's. We are also launching the Archbishop's Annual Appeal 2014 this weekend of March 8th and 9th. In lieu of the homily I decided to have a video presentation of the AAA. In that video Archbishop Cordileone describes some of the programs, ministries and services that impact families within our parish and neighboring parishes. The Appeal is not only about asking for your financial donation but also an eye-opener on how you can practice your stewardship.

Remember that we are not just stewards but also Christian stewards. As Christian stewards we share in the three-fold ministry of Jesus as priest, prophet and king. The common priesthood that we share by virtue of our baptism requires us to celebrate the sacraments, especially the Sunday Eucharist. St. Patrick's main ministry is to provide meaningful liturgies not only to the parishioners but also to the many visitors from all over the world who join us in our liturgical celebrations. Volunteering as a liturgical minister is one way of sharing in the priesthood of Jesus. Catechists in the Religious Education Program, RCIA, Baptismal and Marriage Prep are fulfilling their prophetic ministry in teaching and providing formation for those who are preparing to receive the sacraments. Prophetic ministry is not about predicting the future but it is about proclaiming the truth of the word of God. The ministry of Jesus as king is all about service. Jesus said that he came into the world not to be served but to serve. When we participate in the works of justice and mercy on behalf of persons in need we are able to share in the ministry of Jesus as king. Joining the Saint Vincent de Paul Society here at St. Patrick's is an effective way to reach out to the less fortunate among us. I hope that in the future we will be able to explore more opportunities on how we can become the "Church of the Poor." Throughout the first year of his papacy, becoming the "Church of the Poor" is Pope Francis' constant call to all of us, the clergy and the laity.

Our support of the Archbishop's Annual Appeal is a step in the right direction on how we can truly become the "Church of the Poor." Many, if not all of the programs and ministries of the archdiocese that the AAA supports, benefit our brothers and sisters who are most in need of our gifts of time, talent and treasure.

Stewardship

First, it is worth meditating on this paragraph of the bishops' pastoral letter on stewardship:

The idea and the practice of stewardship have the power to change our self-understanding and our understanding of the meaning of our lives. Steward-disciples recognize God as the origin of life, the giver of freedom, the source of all they have and all they are. They see themselves as caretakers of God's gifts. They are grateful for what they have received and are eager to cultivate their gifts out of love for God and one another.

Reflecting on the above paragraph, we realize that stewardship is grounded in faith. This is what our faith in God tells us: without God we can do nothing. But thanks be to God we are chosen as stewards of God's gifts. These gifts that are entrusted to us define who we are and what we are. What we do with these gifts determines what kind of stewards we are.

We were created to be God's stewards of many gifts and thereby we give glory to the Lord in our worship and in prayer. The cornerstone of our relationship with God is communication expressed through prayer and worship. Prayer is a lifting up of our hearts and our minds to God. An excellent way to pray, of course, is through our celebration of the Eucharist. When we celebrate the mass we gather as a community to give thanks and praise for the many gifts that God has given us.

A good steward is a grateful person who shares his or her blessings with others. This is what a good steward does. The gifts in the form of time, talent and treasure are always meant to be shared with others. Good stewardship is, therefore, faith in action, that is, a faith that is expressed in the love of God by prayer and worship and the love of neighbor by sharing one's gifts.

We must keep in mind that we are not just stewards of God's gifts. We are Christian stewards. We are stewards who belong to a parish community here at St. Patrick's and to the larger church community of the Archdiocese of San Francisco.

There are many ways by which we can exercise our stewardship. Our parish offers a lot of opportunities to all who would like to share their time, talent and treasure. We have various ministries and programs that are designed to serve not just our community but the community at large as well. Liturgical ministry, Religious Education Program, St. Vincent de Paul Conference, RCIA are some of our ministries and programs. Of course your financial support of our parish would ensure that we are able to continue offering these services. However, there are ministries and programs that are beyond the capability of any single parish. Our parish is part of the Archdiocese of San Francisco and there are programs provided by the Archdiocese that we cannot do as a parish. To name a few: Marriage Tribunal, Hospital Chaplains, Detention Ministry, Ethnic Ministry, Ongoing Formation of the clergy and support for seminarians and retired priests.