

Stewardship News

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Diocese of Grand Rapids
Office of Stewardship and Development

The Fruits of the Ten Virtues

*This is article 12 in a series of 12 reflections on stewardship virtues by Dan Potvin,
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Because I have experienced it personally, I believe that as people come to own the ten virtues in their lives they experience a deeper falling in love with God in Christ, which naturally brings them to develop a burning desire to share that love with others. With their faith on fire by the power of the Holy Spirit, they strive to be the best disciples and stewards they can be. People's lives are transformed.

Cultivating the ten virtues of prayer, humility, trust, patience, responsibility, gratitude, generosity, simplicity, mercy and perseverance will naturally lead the Christian Disciple to live a life of stewardship.

Prayer: if we are to grow in holiness and in our relationship with God, prayer is absolutely essential.

Humility: total dependence on God is the hallmark of humility. A Christian steward is filled with humility, not pride.

Trust: the Christian steward seeks to trust God more and to trust themselves much less.

Patience: "Love is patient" 1 Cor. 13:14. The Christian steward is patient with God, with others, and with themselves.

Responsibility: "Well done good and faithful servant" Matthew 25:19. To be responsible is to first understand that we are not our own masters, or the owners of all that we possess. We belong to God, and all that we have has been given to us from our good and gracious God. It is all a gift that is to be used and shared responsibly.

Gratitude: Being a steward means living each day in gratitude, not envy. The secret to happiness is not found in having more but in wanting less.

The Fruits Of Ten Virtues

When people come to own these ten virtues in their lives they experience a deeper falling in love with God in Christ and strive to be the best disciples and stewards they can be.

Summer Time and THE LIVIN' IS EASY

During the summer months there is great temptation to take lightly the spiritual aspect of our lives including Mass attendance, Bible reading and prayer. This article, appropriate for printing in the bulletin, helps remind us to continue keeping God first in all our summer plans and activities.

Hospitality At Mass - A key to good stewardship

Providing hospitality to strangers is a hallmark of Christian stewardship. Extending hospitality is especially important when it comes to welcoming visitors who may be attending Mass at our parish for the first time. A visitor's experience of Christ in the liturgy at our parish is directly impacted by the warmth of the welcome extended by our parishioners.

Summer Stewardship

When we take time to include "inactivity" into our daily life and into our year, we acknowledge that we are not the sum of our career, job, school work, or even parenting. We have been given much more by God and sometimes the only way to experience the richness of those gifts is to take a break from that which we normally do.

Maintaining the Temple

As stewards, we are not called to live life as consumers, taking up space, using God's gifts for our own physical needs. Living as disciples, we must have "discipline" to maintain the physical and spiritual temple that God has uniquely created in each of us.

How Can I Become A Good Steward?

A Christian Steward is one who receives God's gifts gratefully, cherishes and tends them in a responsible manner, shares them in justice and love with others, and returns them with increase to the Lord. This short article, appropriate for printing in your parish bulletin, provides encouragement and suggestions for parishioners on how to become a good steward.

Generosity: for the steward, authentic generosity is born out of an attitude of gratitude. For the Christian steward, giving is motivated by a need to give more than giving to a need.

Simplicity: “Live simply so that others may simply live,” Blessed Mother Teresa. Adopting a simpler lifestyle enables you to appreciate the abundance you enjoy compared to millions around the world. It also opens the door to living more generously.

Mercy: one of the greatest measures of mercy is the ability to forgive. Christian stewards are willing to forgive others and themselves.

Perseverance: the stewardship way of life is both joyful and rewarding, while at the same time being challenging and sometimes difficult so the virtue of perseverance is a vital one in the journey. “Mature disciples make a conscious, firm decision, carried out in action, to be followers of Jesus Christ no matter the cost to themselves.” (Stewardship A Disciple’s Response, 1992 USCCB)

It’s important to remember in all of this that this is not a quick fix; the transformation does not happen all at once, but over a lifetime. It’s a journey, and to quote that great steward, the late Archbishop Thomas Murphy, *“It’s a journey that is well worth the taking!”*





SUMMER TIME AND THE LIVIN IS EASY

Acknowledgement: Daivd's Star Lutheran Church - Jackson, WI

"We should not absent ourselves from the assembly, as some do, but encourage one another, and this all the more because you see that the Day draws near." (Hebrews 10:25)

"Summer time and livin' is easy" the old song goes. Warm weather, vacations, no school, golf, tennis, fishing, hiking, swimming, relaxing ... all seem to define summer time.

Thankfully our Lord never takes a vacation from blessing us with His abundant love, gracious gifts, and providential care. The Psalmist writes about our Heavenly Father, *"He who watches over Israel will neither slumber nor sleep. The Lord watches over you - the Lord is your shade at your right hand."* (Psalm 121:4-5). The Lord's care is ongoing. He never tires of caring for us.

Summer presents God's people with numerous opportunities to be good stewards of His manifold gifts. We care for the wonderful world He has given us when we are outdoors. We treasure the important relationships we enjoy as we spend time with loved ones. Also, we use wisely the material blessings He gives us.

There is great temptation during the summer months to neglect our Lord's precious gifts of His holy Word and Sacrament at Mass. As many other responsibilities are taken more lightly in the relaxed atmosphere of summer living, so, too, are we tempted to take lightly the spiritual aspect of our lives. Vacation plans and recreational activities often replace Mass attendance. We diminish in the stewardship of our Christian faith by letting worldly things take precedence over God in our lives.

In response to our Lord for His grace and mercy, may we place Him first in all our summer plans and activities, allowing adequate time for Mass attendance, Bible reading, meditation, and prayer. May we be good stewards of God's rich blessings. May we all continue to support the mission and ministries of this parish with our regular offerings given from thankful hearts, even when we are away from home.



Hospitality at Mass: A Key to Good Stewardship

ICSC Stewardship E-Bulletin

For many individuals and families alike, summer means travel. And summer travel may mean new visitors to our parish for weekend liturgies. How we greet and provide hospitality for our guests says a lot about our practice of good stewardship.

Providing hospitality to strangers is a hallmark of Christian stewardship. In the Gospel of Matthew good stewards were commended for their hospitality: ***“I was a stranger and you welcomed me”*** (Matt. 25:35). St. Benedict directed his followers to receive guests and travelers as if they were Christ. Extending hospitality is especially important when it comes to welcoming visitors who may be attending mass at our parish for the first time.

There is a lot of anecdotal evidence suggesting that the ability of a first-time visitor to have a meaningful experience of Christ in the liturgy is directly impacted by the warmth of the welcome extended by the local worshipping community. When people say hello, the worship experience is enhanced. A warm welcome is part of evangelization, work necessary in a church’s mission to help people discover or renew faith in Christ.

How do we treat the unknown person who walks by us in church, or who sits next to us at mass? Do we ignore them? Talk around them? Look at them and say nothing? Do we take the initiative to greet them, smile, extend a warm handshake?

Remember, we are Christ’s ambassadors (2 Corinthians 5:20). Our actions and reactions toward visitors at mass communicate who we are and who we represent. Let us take time to welcome visitors to our parish this summer. Welcoming gestures, however small, will not only have a positive impact on visitors, they will make us more hospitable ambassadors of Christ.



Summer Stewardship

St. Pius X Catholic Church - Greensboro, North Carolina

When the summer months come they bring with them increased opportunities for relaxation and recreation. However, our fast moving world would often seek to deny us those gifts of time and space. We can find ourselves in a place where the desire for leisure is seen as a sign of laziness or lack of commitment. But was it not God who gave to us the model of rest by refraining from activity on the seventh day of creation? And if all we have comes from God, by not taking the time for leisure do we not disregard this essential gift?

When we take time to include “inactivity” into our daily life and into our year, we acknowledge that we are not the sum of our career, job, school work, or even parenting. We have been given much more by God and sometimes the only way to experience the richness of those gifts is to take a break from that which we normally do. The German Catholic philosopher, Josef Pieper, spent much of his time writing about these very issues. In his book, *Leisure: The Basis of Culture*, he wrote about the dangers of becoming consumed by work. He wrote, “Of course the world of work begins to become - threatens to become - our only world, to the exclusion of all else. The demands of the working world grow ever more total, grasping ever more completely the whole of human existence.”

This summer, let us be good stewards by taking time to rest in the Lord. At times the fields must lie fallow to be watered by the rain and nourished by the sun. This will provide time to the sower to decide the best crops to plant and seeds to sow. Then his harvest, when it arrives, will be that much fuller.



Maintaining the Temple

Cindy Nau, Stewardship Director; Ascension Catholic Church, Boca Raton FL

There was a man who decided to quit going to church because he wasn't getting anything out of it. He told his friend, "I've been going to church for years, but I don't remember the topic of a single sermon." His friend replied, "I've been married for 30 years and my wife has made me supper most every night. I don't remember a single meal she made me, but I know if I hadn't eaten them, I wouldn't be alive today."

If we consider our body to be a temple, there is some necessary maintenance. The physical temple requires nutrition, exercise, grooming and rest. What are you doing for the spiritual needs of the temple? Going to church is the physical act, but are you feeding and fulfilling your spiritual needs? Are you fully engaged in the prayers, the music and the message of the Mass or are you just going through the physical motions for about an hour?

As stewards, we are not called to live life as consumers, taking up space, using God's gifts for our own physical needs. We are called to live as disciples. Living as disciples, we must have "discipline" to maintain the physical and spiritual temple that God has uniquely created in each of us. Fr. Al McBride is a Norbertine at St. Norbert's Abbey in De Pere, Wisconsin. He challenges us to a discipline for "Temple Maintenance" that will fulfill our physical and our spiritual bodies.

Everyday DO six things:

- *Something good for others*
- *Something good for yourself*
- *Something you don't want to do, but needs to be done*
- *Physical exercise*
- *Mental exercise (reading, writing, puzzles)*
- *Say an original prayer by naming your blessings*

It is our challenge and responsibility to allow God to use us and for us to use His gifts according to His Plan and Purpose. He needs our physical presence to do His work and He needs our spiritual presence to fulfill our relationship with Him.

Our body is a temple; our soul is the temple of God.

How Can I Become A Good Steward?

Source: Blessed Trinity Catholic Church; Ocala FL

As good stewards we know that everything we have, everything we are or ever will be is a gift of a loving, generous God. In keeping with the teaching of Jesus, we are called by our baptism to be sharers of our faith, our prayers, our time allotted to us, our talent and our money.

At our parish we have many opportunities to live out our faith as stewards of God's many blessings.

Prayer -

First and foremost, we are blessed with the gift of prayer. We have a praying community and we gather for Mass as a community to worship our loving and generous God. Also important is taking time for private prayer - privately and personally connecting with God through whatever method of prayer works for you.

Time -

Time is also a gift. There are many ways to use your time at home, in your workplace or at the parish, for the betterment of the kingdom of God. Putting God first with our time is one way to grow as a steward. Become involved with a parish ministry.

Talent-

Everyone has been blessed with a talent and where there's a talent, there's a way to use it, at the parish. Share a talent with your fellow parishioners.

Treasure -

Pray to God, asking for wisdom to understand the truth that your treasure here on earth is a gift from Him. Knowing this in your heart will change your life forever. The giving of your treasure to God as a gift of thanks to Him is a personal gift between you and God. Scripture tells us a tithe, 10% of your earnings, is an acceptable way to give back to God.