

Stewardship June 2020 News



Diocese of Grand Rapids
Office of Stewardship and Development

MERCY

Source: ICSC Stewardship E-Bulletin. Part 11 in a series of 12 stewardship reflections by Dan Potvin, Director of Stewardship for the Archdiocese of Winnipeg, Canada.

Choosing to be a disciple of Jesus Christ transforms our lives. For example, we take on a new identity, which includes that of a steward; we adopt an entirely new set of priorities; and, we are called to live a life of mercy. The Catholic Church has blessed us with a concretely defined model for living a life of mercy in the Corporal and Spiritual Acts of Mercy. Note that they are called 'Acts'. Mercy is love and compassion in action - it requires that we take action. The Corporal Acts of Mercy are obvious expressions of stewardship: *Give Drink to the Thirsty - Clothe the Naked - Shelter the Homeless - Visit Those in Prison - Comfort the Sick - Bury the Dead.*

One of the Spiritual Acts of Mercy is to *Admonish Sinners*. In one's initial consideration of the Spiritual Acts of Mercy, a person might consider the most challenging to be 'Admonishing Sinners'. However, this merciful act has often been referred to as the **greatest act of mercy**. When we admonish sinners, we allow God to work through us, to set the conditions for souls to be saved because people may turn to God and receive His mercy and salvation. Admonishing others takes courage and tact. Good stewards do this less by their words and more by living a Christian lifestyle that others are attracted to! "*It is not by proselytizing that the Church grows, but by attraction*". (Pope Francis, *Evangelii Gaudium*)

The definition of admonishing actually makes the idea quite attractive - Admonish: to advise, caution, counsel against something especially in a mild and good-willed manner. How are we being good stewards by doing this? In the Word of God and Church Teaching we find truth, and this is a gift that we can share in many ways, primarily by our actions but also with our speech. A good admonisher is always careful to choose the right words and the right moment, and most importantly it should be done in a manner that affirms the dignity of the person they are admonishing. A life that is lived in the concern for the salvation of others is good stewardship and, a life lived in mercy.

Mercy

The Archdiocese of Winnipeg, Canada developed a renewed vision for stewardship formation. This is part 11 in a series of 12 reflections. The Catholic Church has defined living a life of mercy in the Corporal and Spiritual Acts of **Mercy**. Corporal Acts of **Mercy** are expressions of stewardship.

Ten Commandments for Welcoming Visitors at Mass

Summer is a time when many people vacation and enjoy the outdoors. It is a time when we see many new faces and visitors attending Mass alongside us. Welcoming newcomers is not just the job of the greeters, ushers, or hospitality ministers - it is everyone's responsibility. Publish these 10 commandments for welcoming visitors at Mass in your bulletin to increase parishioner's awareness.

A Generous Father

This Father's Day (June 21), determine to get to know your Heavenly Father better and allow him to shape your relationship with your parents, your children and those you look after and influence.

Summertime and Stewardship

Summertime is a wonderful time to be recreated, to share your gifts, and to thank God for all that he has given us. Fr. Bill Holtzinger's article would be timely for publishing in your parish bulletin to remind us of our faith-filled response to our time, talent, treasure, and traditions throughout the summer.

Summer/Quarantine Giving

Many Michigan Catholics spend time away from their home parishes during the summer and sometimes don't consider the effect their missed offertory giving has on the parish budget. A brief note that runs in the bulletin each week can be helpful in reminding parishioners that, just like our homes, bills need to be paid whether or not we are there.

TEN COMMANDMENTS FOR WELCOMING VISITORS AT MASS

Source: ICSC Stewardship E-bulletin

Welcoming newcomers to your parish is not just the job of the pastoral staff, ushers, ministers of hospitality or greeters. It is everyone's responsibility. Here are ten things you can do to provide better hospitality in your parish (when social distancing allows).

- 1. Cultivate the virtue of hospitality at Mass.** Many Mass attendees tend to gather into little cliques and ignore those who are not members of their particular clique. They are not really inhospitable, just unaware of the need for hospitality. Make hospitality a new habit when you go to Mass.
- 2. Come early, leave late.** Instead of rushing to Mass to be there on time, and then rushing out at its conclusion, make time to come a little early and linger just a bit later. Make room in your busy life to greet and spend time with others at Mass.
- 3. Go in peace to greet someone!** Seek out someone you've not met before. Shake their hand, introduce yourself, and take a few moments to welcome them to your parish home, God's house.
- 4. Welcome everyone.** Not only do visitors need your warm welcome, regular Mass attendees also need a friendly greeting. Develop a good handshake and be enthusiastic about your parish. You are greeting others in the name of Christ.
- 5. Help newcomers connect.** While you are getting to know visitors, introduce them to other parishioners as the opportunity presents itself. Feel free to invite visitors to sit next to you.
- 6. Say goodbye with genuine warmth.** After Mass, bid farewell to visitors, inviting them to return next week. Introduce them to the pastor if the opportunity arises.
- 7. Avoid parish business.** Avoid conducting parish business with others immediately before or after Mass. Focus on visitors.
- 8. Give visitors information about the parish.** Ensure that a visitor has a bulletin and other information about the parish before they leave. If there is a social gathering after Mass, invite them.
- 9. Be part of a greeting ministry team.** Parishes are always in need of greeters to serve regularly and provide ongoing formation to new greeters. Help out, be a greeter. If your parish doesn't have greeters, now is a good time to start!
- 10. Greet those who already minister in the area of hospitality.** It isn't necessary to neglect the people who are already ministers of hospitality in order to make visitors feel at home. A simple wave and a smile go a long way.

A Generous Father

James Ray founder of the Me & My Dad series - designed to support, encourage and inspire fathers.

It's often said that 'It's easy to be a father, but hard to be a dad'. But what does it actually mean to be a dad? Is it even possible for us to ever clearly define the role of dad? Each of us has a unique viewpoint. Personal experience plays a significant role and it's surprising how much we end up becoming like our parents - even the stuff we don't like, for some strange reason, we naturally imitate.

I recently spoke to a father who was complaining that his dad NEVER read him bedtime stories. He was upset and hurt by this and had held it against his father as a huge and damaging failing.

'So do you often engage with the bedtime routine with your own children?' I asked.

'No.' he said flatly, without much thought. And then, after a pause, a look of revelation and horror passed over his face. He hadn't made the connection. He hadn't realized that the very wound he had suffered he was now potentially perpetuating.

As dads, I think it's important to see where we are making the same mistakes. We dads need to explore together how we can still be fantastic fathers even in the areas in which our own dads were lacking or absent.

I'm so grateful for all the positive role models in my personal life and in the history books - and even the ones in the Bible stories - but it's important to remember that no earthly father has everything figured out. Many people today struggle as a result of a lack of love from their parents - especially their fathers.

Yet the Bible does point to one perfect model and that's the model of God the Father. He is called 'Abba' which means Daddy.

So no matter what your relationship with your parents is like, you can still begin to picture what a relationship with a perfect father would look like.

A Father whose faithfulness is without question, whose generosity is unlimited, whose affection is tender and loving, whose presence is permanent, whose acceptance is unconditional, whose communication with us is constructive, and whose authority is right and true. Father God is not going to fail us, especially when we are struggling. Some earthly parents only provide love when they feel their children deserve it. Not God. The amazing truth is that our Father is merciful and gives us love and protection, even when we don't deserve it...and that's a great help to me!

So, this Father's Day, I recommend that you determine to get to know your Heavenly Father better and allow him to shape your relationship with your parents, your children and those you look after and influence. Everyone needs a dad, and we are called to serve the widows and orphans. We have a responsibility to be dads, even to those who aren't our biological children. Choose to be a daddy (Abba), and draw on the strength and the example of Father God, because the impact of healthy fathering is massively far reaching.

Summertime and Stewardship

Fr. William Holtzinger - St. Anne Catholic Church; Archdiocese of Portland Oregon

The sunshine has finally arrived, school is out, and vacation time is upon us! Yea! As stewards, it is important to remind us all about our faith-filled response to our time, talent, treasure, and tradition.

Time

Summer is a time for nurturing our wellbeing. Spend time in prayer. Go camping. Read that book you've been wanting to get to. Go for a day trip. Whatever it is that energizes you which you haven't been able to do, take out time to make it happen. In addition, ponder on how you can give of your time to a ministry that you've wanted to be part of. Volunteer somewhere that could use the extra help while people are on vacations.

Talent

Where is your talent? Do you sing? Do you like teens or young children? Do you find joy in visiting the sick? Is gardening or landscaping your thing? Seek out people who are involved in a ministry you like. For example, the choir is always in need of extra voices. Why not try volunteering your time with a particular group?

Treasure

As you go camping or traveling, please remember the parish still has responsibilities to pay our bills. Consider how you can maintain your financial commitment to your community of faith. One such method is automatic or electronic giving programs. Contact the parish office for more information. Now you can leave for vacation and not worry about your financial commitment to the Church.

Tradition

Recreation is important to our mind, body, and spirit. Please take time to plan some time to do something fun that will help you be created anew. Remember the trips you once found so moving and foundational to your own youth? Don't forget the traditions you've been given, and share them with your family. Maybe create new ones. Consider a special evening out with the family or family meal in the backyard. Begin a movie night or invite neighbors over for an evening barbecue. Plan an early morning or late evening walk together. Get out the bicycles and go for a ride. Visit friends from the past. Share or create new traditions for your family.

Summertime is a wonderful time to be recreated, to share your gifts, and to thank God for all that he has given us. May this summer be safe and full of joy and adventure as you live out your faith as a steward of the gifts God has given you!



SUMMER/QUARANTINE GIVING - REMINDING PARISHIONERS

Many of us spend time away from home and our home parish during the summer and some of us will still not feel comfortable returning to our parish for some time. Sometimes we forget that the parish operates whether or not we are present and must pay bills whether or not we are there to contribute to the offertory.

SUMMER/QUARANTINE OFFERTORY GIVING

We sincerely thank our parishioners who mail or deliver your offertory contributions to the parish office when you are away from the parish. Just as each of us must pay bills for our home while we are away, the parish must pay its bills while you are away. An easy way to assure consistent offertory payments is to arrange for electronic giving. Contact the parish office for details.

