

Catholic Stewardship

Rooted In

Scripture & Church Teaching



The Archdiocese of Winnipeg, Office of Stewardship

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Vatican II references taken from the Vatican Website, www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/

Stewardship in the Sacred Scriptures

In your small groups reflect on the following scripture passages discussing the stewardship message.

Matthew 25:14-30

The kingdom is also like what happened when a man went away and put his three servants in charge of all he owned. The man knew what each servant could do. So he handed five thousand coins to the first servant, two thousand to the second, and one thousand to the third. Then he left the country.

As soon as the man had gone, the servant with the five thousand coins used them to earn five thousand more. The servant who had two thousand coins did the same with his money and earned two thousand more. But the servant with one thousand coins dug a hole and hid his master's money in the ground.

Some time later the master of those servants returned. He called them in and asked what they had done with his money. The servant who had been given five thousand coins brought them in with the five thousand that he had earned. He said, "Sir, you gave me five thousand coins, and I have earned five thousand more." "Wonderful!" his master replied. "You are a good and faithful servant. I left you in charge of only a little, but now I will put you in charge of much more. Come and share in my happiness!"

Next, the servant who had been given two thousand coins came in and said, "Sir, you gave me two thousand coins, and I have earned two thousand more." "Wonderful!" his master replied. "You are a good and faithful servant. I left you in charge of only a little, but now I will put you in charge of much more. Come and share in my happiness!"

The servant who had been given one thousand coins then came in and said, "Sir, I know that you are hard to get along with. You harvest what you don't plant and gather crops where you haven't scattered seed. I was frightened and went out and hid your money in the ground. Here is every single coin!"

The master of the servant told him, "You are lazy and good-for-nothing! You know that I harvest what I don't plant and gather crops where I haven't scattered seed. You could have at least put my money in the bank, so that I could have earned interest on it."

Then the master said, "Now your money will be taken away and given to the servant with ten thousand coins! Everyone who has something will be given more, and they will have more than enough. But everything will be taken from those who don't have anything. You are a worthless servant, and you will be thrown out into the dark where people will cry and grit their teeth in pain." CEV

Stewardship in the Sacred Scriptures

In your small groups reflect on the following scripture passages discussing the stewardship message.

1 Corinthians 12: 1-11

My friends, you asked me about spiritual gifts. I want you to remember that before you became followers of the Lord, you were led in all the wrong ways by idols that cannot even talk. Now I want you to know that if you are led by God's Spirit, you will say that Jesus is Lord, and you will never curse Jesus.

There are different kinds of spiritual gifts, but they all come from the same Spirit. There are different ways to serve the same Lord, and we can each do different things. Yet the same God works in all of us and helps us in everything we do.

The Spirit has given each of us a special way of serving others. Some of us can speak with wisdom, while others can speak with knowledge, but these gifts come from the same Spirit. To others the Spirit has given great faith or the power to heal the sick or the power to work mighty miracles. Some of us are prophets, and some of us recognize when God's Spirit is present. Others can speak different kinds of languages, and still others can tell what these languages mean. But it is the Spirit who does all this and decides which gifts to give to each of us. CEV

Jeremiah 22:13-16

*King Jehoiakim, you are doomed!
You built a palace
 with large rooms upstairs.
You put in big windows
and used cedar paneling
 and red paint.
But you were unfair
and forced the builders to work
 without pay.*

*More cedar in your palace
doesn't make you a better king
 than your father Josiah.
He always did right –
he gave justice to the poor
 and was honest.
That's what it means
 to truly know me.
So he lived a comfortable life
and always had enough
 to eat and drink. CEV*

Stewardship in the Sacred Scriptures

In your small groups reflect on the following scripture passages discussing the stewardship message.

1 Peter 4:10-13

Each of you has been blessed with one of God's many wonderful gifts to be used in the service of others. So use your gift well. If you have the gift of speaking, preach God's message. If you have the gift of helping others, do it with the strength that God supplies. Everything should be done in a way that will bring honour to God because of Jesus Christ, who is glorious and powerful forever. Amen.

Dear friends, don't be surprised or shocked that you are going through testing that is like walking through fire. Be glad for the chance to suffer as Christ suffered. It will prepare you for even greater happiness when he makes his glorious return. CEV

Proverbs 3:5-10

*With all your heart
you must trust the LORD
and not your own judgment.
Always let him lead you,
and he will clear the road
for you to follow.
Don't ever think that you
are wise enough,
but respect the LORD
and stay away from evil.
This will make you healthy,
and you will feel strong.
Honour the LORD by giving him
your money and the first part
of all your crops.
Then you will have
more grain and grapes
than you will ever need. CEV*

Stewardship in the Sacred Scriptures

In your small groups reflect on the following scripture passages discussing the stewardship message.

Matthew 6:25-33

I tell you not to worry about your life. Don't worry about having something to eat, drink, or wear. Isn't life more than food or clothing? Look at the birds in the sky! They don't plant or harvest. They don't even store grain in barns. Yet your Father in heaven takes care of them. Aren't you worth more than birds?

Can worry make you live longer? Why worry about clothes? Look how the wild flowers grow. They don't work hard to make their clothes. But I tell you that Solomon with all his wealth wasn't as well clothed as one of them. God gives such beauty to everything that grows in the fields, even though it is here today and thrown into a fire tomorrow. He will surely do even more for you! Why do you have such little faith? Don't worry and ask yourselves, "Will we have anything to eat? Will we have anything to drink? Will we have any clothes to wear?" Only people who don't know God are always worrying about such things. Your Father in heaven knows that you need all of these. But more than anything else, put God's work first and do what he wants. Then the other things will be yours as well. CEV

1 Chronicles 29:14-17

But why should we be happy that we have given you these gifts? They belong to you, and we have only given back what is already yours. We are only foreigners living here on earth for a while, just as our ancestors were. And we will soon be gone, like a shadow that suddenly disappears.

Our LORD God, we have brought all these things for building a temple to honour you. They belong to you, and you gave them to us. But we are happy, because everyone has voluntarily given you these things. You know what is in everyone's heart, and you are pleased when people are honest. CEV

Stewardship in the Sacred Scriptures

In your small groups reflect on the following scripture passages discussing the stewardship message.

Romans 12:1-8

Dear friends, God is good. So I beg you to offer your bodies to him as a living sacrifice, pure and pleasing. That's the most sensible way to serve God. Don't be like the people of this world, but let God change the way you think. Then you will know how to do everything that is good and pleasing to him.

I realize how kind God has been to me, and so I tell each of you not to think you are better than you really are. Use good sense and measure yourself by the amount of faith that God has given you. A body is made up of many parts, and each of them has its own use. That's how it is with us. There are many of us, but we each are part of the body of Christ, as well as part of one another.

God has also given each of us different gifts to use. If we can prophesy, we should do it according to the amount of faith we have. If we can serve others, we should serve. If we can teach, we should teach. If we can encourage others, we should encourage them. If we can give, we should be generous. If we are leaders, we should do our best. If we are good to others, we should do it cheerfully. CEV

2 Corinthians 8:1-5, 10-12

My friends, we want you to know that the churches in Macedonia have shown others how kind God is. Although they were going through hard times and were very poor, they were glad to give generously. They gave as much as they could afford and even more, simply because they wanted to. They even asked and begged us to let them have the joy of giving their money for God's people. And they did more than we had hoped. They gave themselves first to the Lord and then to us, just as God wanted them to do.

A year ago you were the first ones to give, and you gave because you wanted to. So listen to my advice. I think you should finish what you started. If you give according to what you have, you will prove that you are as eager to give as you were to think about giving. It doesn't matter how much you have. What matters is how much you are willing to give from what you have. CEV

Stewardship in the Sacred Scriptures

In your small groups reflect on the following scripture passages discussing the stewardship message.

Deuteronomy 8:11-18

Make sure that you never forget the LORD or disobey his laws and teachings that I am giving you today. If you always obey them, you will have plenty to eat, and you will build good houses to live in. You will get more and more cattle, sheep, silver, gold, and other possessions.

But when all this happens, don't be proud! Don't forget that you were once slaves in Egypt and that it was the LORD who set you free. Remember how he led you in that huge and frightening desert where poisonous snakes and scorpions live. There was no water, but the LORD split open a rock, and water poured out so you could drink. He also gave you manna, a kind of food your ancestors had never even heard about. The LORD was testing you to make you trust him, so that later on he could be good to you. When you become successful, don't say, "I'm rich, and I've earned it all myself." Instead, remember that the LORD your God gives you the strength to make a living. That's how he keeps the promise he made to your ancestors. CEV

Luke 6:38

If you give to others, you will be given a full amount in return. It will be packed down, shaken together, and spilling over into your lap. The way you treat others is the way you will be treated. CEV

Stewardship in the Sacred Scriptures

In your small groups reflect on the following scripture passages discussing the stewardship message.

James 2:14-24

My friends, what good is it to say you have faith when you don't do anything to show that you really do have faith? Can that kind of faith save you? If you know someone who doesn't have any clothes or food, you shouldn't just say, "I hope all goes well for you. I hope you will be warm and have plenty to eat." What good is it to say this, unless you do something to help? Faith that doesn't lead us to do good deeds is all alone and dead!

Suppose someone disagrees and says, "It is possible to have faith without doing kind deeds."

I would answer, "Prove that you have faith without doing kind deeds, and I will prove that I have faith by doing them." You surely believe there is only one God. That's fine. Even demons believe this, and it makes them shake with fear.

Does some stupid person want proof that faith without deeds is useless? Well, our ancestor Abraham pleased God by putting his son Isaac on the altar to sacrifice him. Now you see how Abraham's faith and deeds worked together. He proved that his faith was real by what he did. This is what the Scriptures mean by saying, "Abraham had faith in God, and God was pleased with him." That's how Abraham became God's friend. You can now see that we please God by what we do and not only by what we believe. CEV

1 Timothy 6:17-19

Warn the rich people of this world not to be proud or to trust in wealth that is easily lost. Tell them to have faith in God, who is rich and blesses us with everything we need to enjoy life. Instruct them to do as many good deeds as they can and to help everyone. Remind the rich to be generous and share what they have. This will lay a solid foundation for the future, so that they will know what true life is like. CEV

Stewardship in the Sacred Scriptures

In your small groups reflect on the following scripture passages discussing the stewardship message.

Acts 4:32-35

The group of followers all felt the same way about everything. None of them claimed that their possessions were their own, and they shared everything they had with each other. In a powerful way the apostles told everyone that the Lord Jesus was now alive. God greatly blessed his followers and no one went in need of anything. Everyone who owned land or houses would sell them and bring the money to the apostles. Then they would give the money to anyone who needed it. CEV

Malachi 3:6-12

“Descendants of Jacob, I am the LORD All-Powerful, and I never change. That's why you haven't been wiped out, even though you have ignored and disobeyed my laws ever since the time of your ancestors. But if you return to me, I will return to you.

And yet you ask, ‘How can we return?’

You people are robbing me, your God. And, here you are, asking, ‘How are we robbing you?’

You are robbing me of the offerings and of the ten percent that belongs to me. That's why your whole nation is under a curse. I am the LORD All-Powerful, and I challenge you to put me to the test. Bring the entire ten percent into the storehouse, so there will be food in my house. Then I will open the windows of heaven and flood you with blessing after blessing. I will also stop locusts from destroying your crops and keeping your vineyards from producing. Everyone of every nation will talk about how I have blessed you and about your wonderful land. I, the LORD All-Powerful, have spoken!” CEV

Stewardship in the Sacred Scriptures

In your small groups reflect on the following scripture passages discussing the stewardship message.

Luke 12:42-48

The Lord answered: Who are faithful and wise servants? Who are the ones the master will put in charge of giving the other servants their food supplies at the proper time? Servants are fortunate if their master comes and finds them doing their job. A servant who is always faithful will surely be put in charge of everything the master owns.

But suppose one of the servants thinks that the master won't return until late. Suppose that servant starts beating all the other servants and eats and drinks and gets drunk. If that happens, the master will come on a day and at a time when the servant least expects him. That servant will then be punished and thrown out with the servants who cannot be trusted.

If servants are not ready or willing to do what their master wants them to do, they will be beaten hard. But servants who don't know what their master wants them to do will not be beaten so hard for doing wrong. If God has been generous with you, he will expect you to serve him well. But if he has been more than generous, he will expect you to serve him even better. CEV

Mark 12:41-44

Jesus was sitting in the temple near the offering box and watching people put in their gifts. He noticed that many rich people were giving a lot of money. Finally, a poor widow came up and put in two coins that were worth only a few pennies. Jesus told his disciples to gather around him. Then he said:

“I tell you that this poor widow has put in more than all the others. Everyone else gave what they didn't need. But she is very poor and gave everything she had. Now she doesn't have a cent to live on.” CEV

Stewardship & the Teaching of the Catholic Church

In your small groups reflect on the following references from the Catechism of the Catholic Church and discuss the Stewardship message they contain.

222 – 226

Believing in God, the only One, and loving him with all our being has enormous consequences for our whole life.

It means coming to know God's greatness and majesty: "Behold, God is great, and we know him not." Therefore, we must "serve God first."

*It means living in thanksgiving: if God is the only One, everything we are and have comes from him: "What have you that you did not receive?" **1 Cor 4:7**. "What shall I render to the Lord for all his bounty to me?" **Ps 116:12***

It means knowing the unity and true dignity of all men and women: Everyone is made in the image and likeness of God.

It means making good use of created things: faith in God, the only One, leads us to use everything that is not God only insofar as it brings us closer to him, and to detach ourselves from it insofar as it turns us away from him.

1936, 1937

On coming into the world, man is not equipped with everything he needs for developing his bodily and spiritual life. He needs others. Differences appear tied to age, physical abilities, intellectual or moral aptitudes, the benefits derived from social commerce, and the distribution of wealth. The talents are not distributed equally.

The differences belong to God's plan, who wills that each receive what he needs from others, and that those endowed with particular "talents" share the benefits with those who need them. These differences encourage often oblige persons to practice generosity, kindness and sharing of goods; they foster mutual enrichment of cultures:

I distribute the virtues quite diversely; I do not give all of them to each person, but some to one, some to others... I shall give principally charity to one; justice to another; humility to this one, a living faith to that one... And so I have given many gifts and graces, both spiritual and temporal, with such diversity that I have not given everything to one single person, so that you may be constrained to practice charity towards one another... I have willed that one should need another and that all should be my ministers in distributing the graces and gifts they have received from me.

St. Catherine of Siena, Dial. I, 7.

Stewardship & the Teaching of the Catholic Church

In your small groups reflect on the following references from the Catechism of the Catholic Church and discuss the Stewardship message they contain.

2446, 2447

St. John Chrysostom vigorously recalls this: “Not to enable the poor to share in our goods is to steal from them and deprive them of life. The goods we possess are not ours, but theirs.” “The demands of justice must be satisfied first of all; that which is already due in justice is not to be offered as a gift of charity.”

When we attend to the needs of those in want, we give them what is theirs, not ours. More than performing works of mercy, we are paying a debt of justice.

St. Gregory the Great, Regula Pastoralis

The works of mercy are charitable actions by which we come to the aid of our neighbour in his spiritual and bodily necessities. Instructing, advising, consoling, comforting are spiritual works of mercy, as are forgiving and bearing wrongs patiently. The corporal works of mercy consist especially in feeding the hungry, sheltering the homeless, clothing the naked, visiting the sick and imprisoned, and burying the dead. Among these, giving alms to the poor is one of the chief witnesses to fraternal charity; it is also a work of justice pleasing to God.

949, 952

In the primitive community of Jerusalem, the disciples devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of the bread and the prayers. Acts 2:42

Communion in the faith, the faith of the faithful is the faith of the Church, received from the apostles. Faith is a treasure of life which is enriched by being shared.

*“They had everything in common”. Acts 4:32 Everything the true Christian has is to be regarded as a good possessed in common with everyone else. All Christians should be ready and eager to come to the help of the needy... and their neighbours in want. A Christian is a **steward** of the Lord’s goods.*

DECREE ON THE APOSTOLATE OF THE LAITY
APOSTOLICAM ACTUOSITATEM

SOLEMNLY PROMULGATED BY HIS HOLINESS, POPE PAUL VI, NOVEMBER 18, 1965

In your small groups reflect on the following sections from the Second Vatican Council's Decree on the Apostolate of the Laity and discuss how stewardship relates.

THE VOCATION OF THE LAITY TO THE APOSTOLATE

2. The Church was founded for the purpose of spreading the kingdom of Christ throughout the earth for the glory of God the Father, to enable all men to share in His saving redemption,(1) and that through them the whole world might enter into a relationship with Christ. All activity of the Mystical Body directed to the attainment of this goal is called the apostolate, which the Church carries on in various ways through all her members. For the Christian vocation by its very nature is also a vocation to the apostolate. No part of the structure of a living body is merely passive but has a share in the functions as well as life of the body: so, too, in the body of Christ, which is the Church, "the whole body . . . in keeping with the proper activity of each part, derives its increase from its own internal development" (Eph. 4:16).

Indeed, the organic union in this body and the structure of the members are so compact that the member who fails to make his proper contribution to the development of the Church must be said to be useful neither to the Church nor to himself.

In the Church there is a diversity of ministry but a oneness of mission. Christ conferred on the Apostles and their successors the duty of teaching, sanctifying, and ruling in His name and power. But the laity likewise share in the priestly, prophetic, and royal office of Christ and therefore have their own share in the mission of the whole people of God in the Church and in the world.

3. The laity derive the right and duty to the apostolate from their union with Christ the head; incorporated into Christ's Mystical Body through Baptism and strengthened by the power of the Holy Spirit through Confirmation, they are assigned to the apostolate by the Lord Himself. They are consecrated for the royal priesthood and the holy people (cf. 1 Peter 2:4-10) not only that they may offer spiritual sacrifices in everything they do but also that they may witness to Christ throughout the world.

For the exercise of this apostolate, the Holy Spirit Who sanctifies the people of God through ministry and the sacraments gives the faithful special gifts also (cf. 1 Cor. 12:7), "allotting them to everyone according as He wills" (1 Cor. 12:11) in order that individuals, administering grace to others just as they have received it, may also be "good stewards of the manifold grace of God" (1 Peter 4:10), to build up the whole body in charity (cf. Eph. 4:16). From the acceptance of these charisms, including those which are more elementary, there arise for each believer the right and duty to use them in the Church and in the world for the good of men and the building up of the Church, in the freedom of the Holy Spirit who "breathes where He wills" (John 3:8). This should be done by the laity in communion with their brothers in Christ, especially with their pastors who must make a judgment about the true nature and proper use of these gifts not to extinguish the Spirit but to test all things and hold for what is good (cf. 1 Thess. 5:12,19,21).(4)

DOGMATIC CONSTITUTION ON THE CHURCH
LUMEN GENTIUM

SOLEMNLY PROMULGATED BY HIS HOLINESS POPE PAUL VI, ON NOVEMBER 21, 1964

CHAPTER IV - THE LAITY

In your small groups reflect on the following sections from the Second Vatican Council's Document on the Church and discuss how stewardship relates.

33. The laity are gathered together in the People of God and make up the Body of Christ under one head. Whoever they are they are called upon, as living members, to expend all their energy for the growth of the Church and its continuous sanctification, since this very energy is a gift of the Creator and a blessing of the Redeemer.

The lay apostolate, however, is a participation in the salvific mission of the Church itself. Through their baptism and confirmation all are commissioned to that apostolate by the Lord Himself. Moreover, by the sacraments, especially holy Eucharist, that charity toward God and man which is the soul of the apostolate is communicated and nourished. Now the laity are called in a special way to make the Church present and operative in those places and circumstances where only through them can it become the salt of the earth (2*). Thus every layman, in virtue of the very gifts bestowed upon him, is at the same time a witness and a living instrument of the mission of the Church itself "according to the measure of Christ's bestowal".(197)

Upon all the laity, therefore, rests the noble duty of working to extend the divine plan of salvation to all men of each epoch and in every land. Consequently, may every opportunity be given them so that, according to their abilities and the needs of the times, they may zealously participate in the saving work of the Church.

34. The supreme and eternal Priest, Christ Jesus, since he wills to continue his witness and service also through the laity, vivifies them in this Spirit and increasingly urges them on to every good and perfect work.

For besides intimately linking them to His life and His mission, He also gives them a sharing in His priestly function of offering spiritual worship for the glory of God and the salvation of men. For this reason the laity, dedicated to Christ and anointed by the Holy Spirit, are marvelously called and wonderfully prepared so that ever more abundant fruits of the Spirit may be produced in them. For all their works, prayers and apostolic endeavors, their ordinary married and family life, their daily occupations, their physical and mental relaxation, if carried out in the Spirit, and even the hardships of life, if patiently borne—all these become "spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ".(199) Together with the offering of the Lord's body, they are most fittingly offered in the celebration of the Eucharist. Thus, as those everywhere who adore in holy activity, the laity consecrate the world itself to God.