

SAID ED March 2, 2014

More On Stewardship

Last week I wrote about being good stewards of the gifts that God has given us. This weekend we'll hear the testimony from members of our parish who have responded to the call of good stewardship. They are finding that returning a portion of their gifts to the Lord to be a great source of spiritual growth.

So what is this call to Stewardship? And what does scripture have to say about returning a portion of our gifts to the Lord? As I was growing up, I learned from my parents that, although giving to the Lord requires a sacrifice, God is never outdone in generosity. The words of the Lord's Prayer, "give us this day our daily bread" are a powerful reminder that God does indeed care for us. We just need to place our trust and confidence in Him. One of the ways in which we do this, is by taking very seriously the invitation in which God says to return one tenth or 10% of everything you have been given as a way of saying thank you to God.

This 10% or tithe, as it is sometimes called, is an honest and faith filled admission of our dependence on God. It's a way of acknowledging that everything we have is a gift of God. God will never be outdone in generosity. In order to recognize the generosity of God, we just need to have an "attitude of gratitude." The "tithe" is a very tangible way of expressing our gratitude.

This is not a new concept; it has been part of our church from the beginning. Studies consistently show that we Catholics have just not responded to this biblical standard very well. Research shows that the average Catholic household contribution across our country is 1.20% of a typical family's household income. Our parish average is about the same. We have suggested that giving 5% to our parish and 5% to other charities was a good way of living out our call to be good stewards. Thanks to the many members of our parish community who have responded generously thus far.

This year we continue our annual renewal in hopes that once again everyone will take this opportunity to review their financial situation and see what percentage of their resources are being returned to the service of the Lord. Last week we sent a mailing inviting you to renew your stewardship commitment in anticipation of today's formal renewal request. I realize this is a bold request to make in these challenging times, but I believe this is a wonderful way of experiencing God's care, love and providence in our lives.

So I ask: does your commitment to our parish approach 5% of your regular income before taxes? If not, please consider this an invitation to accept the Lord's challenge and allow God to care for you and your household by prioritizing your gift to our parish community.

The more we give to the Lord, the more our parish can service our community through our many ministries.

Have a great week!
