

"A PRUDENT INVESTMENT STRATEGY"

Investing for the long haul, the very long haul

As we approach the end of the calendar year, many people devote a lot of time and effort to reviewing their investment portfolios. Surveying the menu and complexity of today's investment options takes perseverance. Becoming familiar with the terminology of the investment world is a challenge. From ETF's (exchange-traded funds) and TIPS (Treasury inflation-protected securities) to prospectuses and Form 10-K's (annual reports), developing an understanding of investment vehicles and corporate reports requires hours of study.

As if the palette of investment options is not broad enough, the uncertainty of the global economic outlook further exacerbates the tasks for today's investor. The ups and downs of the Dow Jones Industrial Average can produce anxiety in even the most experienced investor.

In short, maximizing security and long-term "return on investment" is both demanding and uncertain.

When viewed from the perspective of our relatively short earthly lives, is it all worth it? Of what value is it to be the "richest person in the cemetery"?

Jesus offers us a long-range planning "prudent investment strategy".

"Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and decay destroy, and thieves break in and steal. But store up treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor decay destroys, nor thieves break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there also will your heart be." [Matthew 6: 19-21]

It has now been nine years since our parish formally adopted the stewardship way of life. During that time we have been incredibly graced by an understanding of the spirituality of stewardship. We have come to understand that all that we are and all that we have are gifts from God. In gratitude for these gifts, we have come to experience profound happiness in giving back to God the first portion of our time, talent and treasure to help build the Kingdom of God in Lawrence and beyond.

Fifty years ago, the Second Vatican Council proclaimed that the Kingdom of God is present in history, imperfect but real. It will come to fulfillment by God's power, on his terms, in his own time. In the interim, people through their worthy deeds of this life make a limited but real human contribution to building the Kingdom of God. They do so with an eye to present happiness and also to the perfect fulfillment which the Kingdom - and themselves as part of it - will enjoy in the life to come. The Council stated that the purpose of the human vocation to "earthly service" of one's fellow human beings is precisely to "make ready the material of the celestial realm."

Stewardship-inspired concrete actions of sharing our gifts of time, talent and treasure may be thought of as seed that falls on rich soil, which grows and yields fruit thirty, sixty, and a hundredfold.

This weekend, we are invited to formally renew our roles as good stewards and committed disciples of Jesus Christ by prayerfully discerning and actively committing to concrete ways by which we will share our gifts of time, talent and treasure in 2013.

The strategy is therefore set before us, "a prudent investment strategy". A strategy that is simple to understand, easy to execute, not subject to uncertainty, and with the "return on investment" of eternal life.

Now, that's investing for the long haul, the very long haul.

Ed Sampson
Stewardship Commission Chairman