

RESOURCE MANAGEMENT 101

A Reflection on Opportunities for Stewardship

No, this isn't a tutorial on woodland preservation, exploration for natural gas, or effective use of water power. Rather, it's some thoughts on the identification of our own unique set of gifts from God, our appreciation for those blessings, and motivation for us to share them to help build the Kingdom of God.

It has now been almost eight 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. From the get go, we have dismissed the popular misconception that stewardship is just another euphemism for fund-raising. We have come to understand that all 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.

Perhaps it would be good to review the concept of "gifts from God". What do we mean by that phrase? Well, consider what makes you – you.

At the moment of our conception, God bestowed on us a unique set of characteristics that make any one of us truly different from any other person that ever lived, is living now, or will live in the future. As we grow up, those characteristics ("gifts", "talents", or "resources") become evident in a myriad of ways. Some of us receive gifts of outstanding athletic ability; others, physical beauty; others, intellectual acumen; others, persuasive personalities; others, artistic competencies; and, sometimes, combinations of these or all of them together.

Whatever the particular set of gifts, it is unique for every individual. In short, it's what makes you – you.

The spirituality of stewardship encourages us to spend the time to identify these gifts – to perform a sort of inventory of our resources.

Once identified, stewardship, which is a characteristic of Christian discipleship, challenges us in a spirit of gratitude to God, to share these resources with others in purposeful, concrete ways to enhance the lives of the members of our families, our fellow students, our co-workers, our neighbors, the members of our parish community, and the city – all toward advancing the Kingdom of God.

The sharing of our resources of time, talent and treasure is a meaningful first step toward adopting the stewardship way of life. These examples of "giving back to God" can be viewed as seeds for future growth – both our own spiritual growth as disciples of Christ, and the growth of the world at large toward the Kingdom of God.

I encourage you to conduct your own exercise in "resource management". You may well be surprised at what you come up with.

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