The Flame of Catholic Stewardship
at
Saint Elizabeth Church
Upper Uwchlan Township, PA

(Stewardship: It may not be what you think!)

Unless the Lord build the house, they labor in vain who build it.
(Psalms 127:1)
Welcome to Saint Elizabeth Parish...
...A community committed to stewardship of our time, talent and treasure.

The idea of stewardship is not new, but many still ask questions like, "What is stewardship?" and even more importantly, "What is Catholic Stewardship?" and "How and when did this all start?"

The Bible makes a number of references to stewardship. Jesus Himself describes a disciple's life in terms of stewardship (see Matthew 25:14-30; Luke 12:42-48). Unfortunately, stewardship is often misunderstood as just another term for soliciting more money in the collection baskets or a church fund raising campaign.

Although Catholic Stewardship does include a stewardship of treasure (the financial support one gives to the church and to other charities), **stewardship, in its fullest sense, is a way of living as a disciple of Jesus Christ.** Stewardship involves a real conversion of mind and heart to a new way of understanding one's life and its responsibilities. It truly is a way of life!

In 1992, the American Bishops issued a pastoral letter entitled **Stewardship: A Disciple's Response.** From the outset of the establishment of Saint Elizabeth parish in 2000, our founding pastor, Father Thomas Mullin, and a council of parishioners have worked over the years to design and implement a comprehensive and dynamic program of stewardship specifically tailored for our parishioners.

The primary goal of the Stewardship Council’s efforts is to **deepen the spiritual foundation which motivates and encourages parishioners to make a personal commitment to a stewardship way of life.** This is done through cherishing our beliefs and living them out by our actions in everyday activities.

Stewardship begins with the recognition that **everything we have is a gift from God** and that God expects us to return a fair portion of these gifts by sharing our **time and talent and treasure**, with others. These are the **three T's** of Stewardship!
Stewardship of Time and Talent

Living a stewardship life means acknowledging that we are called to be stewards of the gifts that God has entrusted to us. We are challenged to receive these gifts with gratitude, cultivate them responsibly, and share them lovingly and unselfishly with others. In his first letter to Saint Timothy, Paul writes,

"Tell them to do good, to be rich in good works, to be generous, and ready to share." (1 Timothy 6/18)

Personal responsibility in the use of our God-given gifts is inseparable from genuine stewardship. It entails a full accountability for one's life and one's gifts, acknowledging that God is the true owner and the creator of all. It is a life-long journey of following in the steps of Jesus Christ who loved us so much that he laid down his life for us. How can we not return his love by sharing with others in his name all that we have? Here are a few practical examples:

- sing in one of the church choirs
- visit someone in the hospital or a nursing home
- help to welcome parishioners & guests at Sunday Mass
- assist in the elementary faith formation program
- participate in a Respect Life or a Good Works project

No God-given talent is too small to share, and examples of personal stewardship are virtually endless. Blessed Teresa of Calcutta expressed it this way:

"We cannot all do great things, but we can do small things with great love."

Saint Elizabeth Church offers a wide variety of ministries and activities in which parishioners of all ages can share their time and talent, including youth ministry programs, spiritual groups and liturgical ministries, faith formation and evangelization programs, community outreach activities, social fellowship events, and many more. For more information about all our parish ministries, simply call the parish ministry center at 610-321-1200.
Stewardship of Treasure

_Stewardship of treasure_ starts with the understanding that we are not isolated individuals, but rather that we live in a community called the "Body of Christ." Living in this community entails a financial commitment in support of the community, not unlike the financial commitment to support one’s own family.

This commitment begins with a prayerful reflection about what financial contribution you will direct to the support of the parish and other charitable activities. It involves an up-front budgeting decision to contribute a deliberate amount on a consistent basis throughout the year, not simply to drop in the collection basket whatever is left over at the end of the week.

Start by asking yourself, "Do I give to God first, or do I give to God what is left over?" Give until it feels good!

In the Gospel of Saint Luke (12/48), Jesus warns his disciples: _"Much will be required of the person entrusted with much; and still more will be demanded of the person entrusted with more."_ Most of us have been richly blessed in material goods and we share a responsibility as Catholic stewards to share a generous portion of our material resources with others, especially those most in need.

**Becoming a faithful steward: where do I go from here?**

As you reflect upon how God is calling you to share your time, talent and treasure in Catholic Stewardship, imagine that Jesus himself is sitting across the table helping you decide what to do. What would your conversation with Jesus be like? What is Jesus asking you to do as one of his modern-day disciples?

In writing to the Colossians (3/17), Saint Paul reminds us:

> "Whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him."

Stewardship is an inspiring way of life in which we give back to God what he has given to us by sharing with others around us. **Be a good and faithful steward!**