

Why do you say that I am responsible for the support of the parish?

We are called to carry on the mission of Jesus in the world. We each have a personal responsibility to participate in and support the mission of the Church and our parish. The Parish is a vital source of support to parishioners and communities. It is in the parish that people and families become part of a worshipping and serving communities. The parish is where we find faith and are encouraged to live our faith.

Our participation takes different forms according to our different gifts, but there is a fundamental obligation arising from the sacrament of Baptism (cf. Pope John Paul II, *Christifideles Laici*, no. 15): that we place our gifts, our resources – our selves – at God’s service in and through the Church.

What does giving financially have to do with my spirituality?

Within the larger context of Biblical stewardship, Financial Stewardship calls us to gratefully share our financial gifts and to give generously in gratitude for the many blessings we have received from God. One way we can do this is by financially supporting the parish.

Too often we want to separate the issue of giving, particularly the giving of money, from those more “spiritual” aspects of our faith lives. The planning process itself can be a spiritual exercise, focusing our attention on our values and priorities.

Where does the money from my Planned Offering Pledge go?

Your Planned Offering Pledge directly supports the General Offertory, which funds our ministries, utilities and maintenance for our facilities, and administrative expenses, including salaries and benefits. The quality of our liturgies, Parish programs, ministries, facilities, and outreach to the needy is determined by the support we receive from you. Our school and religious education programs are funded primarily by tuition and fees. The parish’s subsidy of these programs totals less than 15% of all costs for each program. We believe that parish support is an important element in keeping Catholic education affordable to all.

What about the other charities that I support?

The amount you pledge to support our parish should not effect your giving to other charities. It is generally thought that about one-half of what you give should go to your local parish, while the other half goes to other charitable needs that meet our standards and help fulfill our values as Catholic Christians. We are asking you to share one hour of your weekly earnings with our parish; you may want to consider sharing the second hour with other charities that you support.

What is Stewardship?

It is a lifestyle, a life of total accountability and responsibility. It is the acknowledging of God as the Creator and Owner of all. Christian Stewards see themselves as the caretakers of all Gods' gifts. Gratitude for these many gifts is expressed in prayer, worship, offering and action. Stewardship is a way of life. It is a way of thanking God for all our blessings by returning to God a portion of the many gifts (everything we have, for instance, our time, talent and treasure) that we have been given. It involves the intentional, planned and proportionate giving of all we have.

Finally, stewardship encourages everyone to participate in the task of building the Kingdom of God. When we explain that God has given each of us certain things, that these gifts are our responsibility to care for, and that we are accountable for what we do with these gifts, then there is no doubt that everyone should be involved. Stewardship rejects the notion that we must "have it all" and instead, demonstrates the value of giving in love, in service and in justice.

Stewardship is based on the spiritual principles of the Old Testament and the teachings of Jesus Christ.

"Christ has no body now on earth but yours, no hands but yours, yours are the eyes through which he is go about doing good, yours are the hands with which he is to bless people now..."
(St. Teresa of Avila)

What difference will Stewardship make in my life?

The difference is the motivation for giving. It is so easy to put our lives on hold and with it all of our good intentions. "Someday when I have more time" or "When I've reached my goals" or "I'll give my share of time, talent and treasure but not right now." What will we tell those in need of prayer, in need of a kind ear or the hundreds of other acts of stewardship that will go undone and the gifts that the Lord has given us that will go unshared if we all were to think that way? Stewardship acknowledges that God is the source of all of our gifts and talents, and we are the caretakers of these gifts. Effective stewardship education and formation relies on leadership by example.

Stewardship encourages us to make a difference and to become involved.

- Challenges individuals and families to re-examine their relationship with God, each other, the workplace, the community, and the parish.
- Increases awareness and appreciation of the presence of the Lord in our lives.

Where stewardship has been implemented, both givers' and receivers' lives have been changed. True conversion has taken place in the hearts and minds of many who embrace Stewardship as a way of life.

"Boast not of tomorrow, for you know not what any day may bring forth." (Proverbs 27:1)

What is meant by giving of one's time, talent, and material possessions?

Our time, our talents, and our material possessions constitute just some of the treasures we have been given by our very generous God. Sharing these gifts involves being with God in prayer and worship, using our gifts to help build God's Kingdom among our family and friends, our workplace, and our communities and parishes. It means becoming ministers of the Gospel in our communities and parishes in new (and perhaps not-so-new) ways!

"Men do not light a lamp and then put it under a bushel basket. They set it on a stand where it gives light to all in the house. In the same way, your light must shine before men so that they may see goodness in your acts and give praise to your heavenly father." (Mark 5:14-16)

What's the difference between Stewardship and fund raising?

Throughout the New Testament, Jesus specifically talks about how God wants us to live our lives to help build God's Kingdom. Scripture talks about what we should be doing with the gifts that God has given us. Stewardship is based on Jesus' challenge to live as God has planned, not on the monetary needs of our parish. Stewardship is based on our need to give out of gratitude to our most generous God, not on the church's (or any other charity's) need to receive.

There will always be needs of a parish or any other charity or institution. Fund raising efforts are built around institutional or charitable needs (a new roof, a new boiler, renovated buildings, etc.) Good stewards respond to the needs that fund raising efforts address, but they always focus on the primary fact that, as disciples of Jesus who have been gifted by a most generous God, *we need to give!*