

Living What We Pray
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The Stewardship Office was pleased to have Fr. Brendan McGuire from San Jose, CA as the presenter for diocesan stewardship days April 16 – 19. Over four hundred people participated in the sessions hosted at St. Michael's church in Calgary and Assumption church of All Saint's parish in Lethbridge. This event was only the second bi-annual diocesan-wide stewardship event since the Stewardship Office opened in July 2005.

In his presentation entitled "Living What We Pray", Fr. Brendan challenged us to live our faith out loud, LOL, by making it visible to others. In the early years of the church, he reminded us, Christians were persecuted for practicing their faith. The important question he posed is whether there would be enough evidence today to convict *us* for being Christians.

What is the evidence of your Christianity?

Stewardship is a way of living the Gospel, a way of being Christ's disciple and it starts with taking time daily for prayer and reflection. A beginner's prescription for prayer could look like this:

- Schedule a fifteen-minute block of time each day for prayer.
- Be consistent about the time and perhaps even the place. Having a routine in the body (time and place) helps develop the routine in the mind and spirit.
- Spend the first five minutes simply listening. Quiet your thoughts so you can hear the voice of God.
- A simple steward's prayer is to thank God for all the gifts we have received into our lives that day. Gifts may include family, friends, freedom, health, work, forgiveness, life itself.

During his presentation, Fr. Brendan recalled his fourteenth birthday. When his father returned from work that day and invited the young Brendan to come into the living room, Brendan rushed in anticipating a special gift for his birthday. After tearing open the package his father offered and finding a pair of shoes not to his liking, Brendan dropped the shoes on the floor and stormed out of the room. He cast a quick glance back at his father and saw tears welling up in the man's eyes. After a few more steps down the hall Brendan stopped, reconsidered his reaction, and went back to the living room, apologetic. His father looked into his eyes and said: "Son, I sacrificed time out of my work day and travelled far across town to find these shoes. They may not be the latest style but they are specially fashioned to help with your back problems. What you don't realise is that the shoes are not the gift. The shoes are merely a token; the real gift is my love for you."

When have you treated God as Brendan treated his father? When have you refused, squandered, or ignored the gifts God has given you? The gifts in your life are expressions of God's love for you. Open God's gifts, cultivate them, share them, return them and most of all, be grateful for them.