

## **For Stewards Everything Becomes a Gift**

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***"Once one chooses to become a disciple of Jesus Christ, Stewardship is not an option."***

As members of the Roman Catholic Church in the Diocese of Calgary we understand stewardship as entailing these four principles:

1. Receiving God's gifts with gratitude.
2. Cultivating God's gifts responsibly.
3. Sharing God's gifts lovingly and in justice with others.
4. Returning God's gifts with increase to the Lord.

When living as Catholic Christian Stewards, we are called to see everything that we are, all of the abilities that we have, and all of our material wealth as gifts which we have received from God. These gifts include the most basic things like the air that we breathe, our families and the people in our lives, the food that we eat and the homes that we live in.

In our society, most of the advertisements in the media would try to convince us that we are not adequate. It is implied that we are not good enough, or that we do not have enough money or enough of the 'right' possessions. But truly you don't need those things – when you look at the example of the life and stewardship of a person like Mother Theresa, who lived among the poorest of the poor of India, you will see how in her own way, without these possessions, she changed the world.

Mother Theresa once said that while she needed money to purchase food and supplies, she would rather have your presence and some of your time than a financial donation. She saw your time and talent as something far more valuable. Everything which she received, she viewed as a gift from God for the benefit of the poor.

How we view ourselves has a huge effect on how we behave and what we do with our gifts. If we have a negative view of ourselves and of the world, then we are robbing ourselves of the gifts which we have been given. But, if we look in the mirror and see a person created in the image of God, who breathed life into us, then almost anything is possible, especially if we accept our gifts from God with an attitude of gratefulness.

Some gifts are obvious and easier to identify than others. The important thing is to recognize them, and appreciate them as gifts. When Stewardship becomes a way of life, everything becomes a gift.