



### What is stewardship?

Christian stewardship is a way of life based on the awareness that everything we have and everything we are comes from God. It is counter-cultural. Stewardship requires us to recognise our dependence on God and one another in a culture that praises self-sufficiency. Stewardship cultivates an attitude of abundance in a society focused on need.

There are four principles of stewardship.

1. The first principle of stewardship is to **receive God's gifts with gratitude**. Receiving engenders dependence on God. Gratitude acknowledges abundance.
2. The second principle of stewardship is to **cultivate God's gifts responsibly**. Literally, "steward" means "manager of the house." God has entrusted His house to us. We are accountable to God for managing the gifts given to us and we do so both for the glory of God and in the service of humankind.
3. The third principle of stewardship is to **share God's gifts lovingly and in justice with others**. The self-emptying sacrifice of Jesus on the cross is for us the model of sharing with love and in justice.
4. The fourth principle of stewardship is to **return God's gifts with increase to the Lord**. It is often the fear of losing what we have

coupled with inertia that keep us from giving. Yet, the Gospel urges us not to hoard or be content with the status quo. Faith in God's love and abiding care gives us the confidence to give so that our gifts may bear fruit.

### Why stewardship?

*Once one chooses to become a disciple of Jesus Christ, stewardship is not an option [Disciples' Response]*

Just as God loved us by putting on flesh in the person of Jesus, so we love God by putting on Christ and loving others. Jesus makes the way of stewardship very clear. His self-emptying sacrifice on the cross was for our salvation. By working for justice, caring for those in need, and putting our abilities and resources at the service of others, we contribute to the mission of the church in continuing Jesus' saving work in the world. We are co-redeemers with Christ and ourselves become stewards of the mystery of salvation. To be a disciple means to be like Christ and to continue Christ's mission of the redemption of the world.

### What difference will stewardship make in my life?

The world will never run out of needs. Trying to respond to the needs of the world on their own terms will leave the giver discouraged. Stewardship shifts the focus from the needs of others to our relationship with God. As we live out our baptismal commitment to the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit,

united by love, we gradually grow in the life of discipleship so that our will and God's will increasingly coincide and God becomes more deeply present to us than we are to ourselves (*Deus caritas est*, Benedict XVI). Stewardship changes your priorities so that self-abandonment becomes your will and God becomes your joy.

### What difference will stewardship make in my parish?

Home is a place of love, safety, trust, and acceptance. It is also a place of responsibility, inter-dependence, teamwork, sacrifice, investment, and chores! Giving people a job to do, gives them a stake in the community. Parish stewardship is the difference between programs and people, the difference between planning and prayer, it's the difference between fossilisation and evangelisation, and it's the difference between a place you visit and a place you belong.

### What do I do?

There is no pre-fabricated program for stewardship. It requires a conversion of individual hearts and an ongoing transformation of a community. There are concrete stewardship practices. You and your parish are already doing many of these things to some degree. To increase the stewardship spirituality in your parish requires a conscious commitment to the process that rests upon a spiritual foundation, formation in prayer, the development of identity, and a building up of community through trust and accountability.



### What resources are available through the stewardship office?

#### Web site

[www.rcdiocese-calgary.ab.ca/stewardship/](http://www.rcdiocese-calgary.ab.ca/stewardship/)  
Check the Web site for weekly bulletin reflections, the stewardship newsletter, links, various resource pages, and descriptions of printed resources available for purchase

#### Workshops

The Stewardship Office can bring workshops on stewardship to your parish. There is an *Introduction to Stewardship Spirituality* workshop, and another on the *Principles of Stewardship*. These are geared towards parish councils, stewardship committees, and parish staff. There is a *Stewardship Practices Workshop for Ministry Leaders*. There will be *Stewardship Retreats* available during Advent and Lent. We can also customise a presentation or workshop for your parish. Contact Simone at the Stewardship Office to book a workshop and discuss the possibilities.

#### Diocesan Stewardship Day

On May 13, the Diocese of Calgary held its second Stewardship Day. Jim Kelley from the Diocese of Charlotte in North Carolina was our invited speaker, along with presenters from three diocesan parishes who have taken the plunge with stewardship initiatives. The program and other materials from the event are available on the Stewardship Web site.



Participants at the 2nd Annual Stewardship Day • May 13  
L-R: Pat Cushion, Christ Church Anglican; Shirley Hazen, St. Mark's; Margaret Senecal and John Thomson, Sacred Heart, Strathmore; Rob Bedin, St. Luke's; and Fr. Bob Kasun, St. Thomas More

Stewardship is about your identity in Christ. What you do comes from who you are as co-redeemers with Christ and stewards of the mystery of salvation. St. Teresa of Avila explains as much in a poem:

*Christ has no body now on earth,  
but yours.*

*No hands but yours*

*No feet but yours*

*Yours are the eyes through which the  
compassion of Christ must look out  
on the world.*

*Yours are the feet with which He is to go  
about doing good.*

*Yours are the hands with which He is to  
bless His people.*



Micheline Payne from Holy Family Parish, Medicine Hat gave a well received presentation on *How to Host a Parish Ministry Fair* at the Diocesan Stewardship Day