

*Stewardship and the Vietnamese Community
Region XI Stewardship Conference May 4-6, 2014
Crowne Plaza Anaheim Resort, California*

- I. Brief Historical Sketch of the Vietnamese Experience
 - A. History of Exodus: Transition from Vietnam to the New Environment (New World)
 - 1. Migration from North Vietnam to South Vietnam in 1954 (17th parallel divide)
 - 2. Fall of Saigon in 1975; entire country under the Communist Regime
 - 3. Refugee Status: Arriving in the Host Countries: U.S., Canada, Australia, France, Philippines; U.K., etc.
 - 4. The Vietnamese Living in Diaspora (estimates: 3,700,000 Overseas; U.S. only: 1,700,000): largest concentration U.S.: Orange, CA; San Jose, CA; Houston, TX, Louisiana, Alabama, Mississippi, Atlantic Sea Board
 - 5. Fr. Tuyen's experience: Family separated in Church; male dominated; never heard of stewardship; no envelopes used; titles are bought; priests are responsible for finances; no finance council; designated contributions from families; no bequests; no endowments for the future; Church is debt free; no monthly bills
 - B. Societal and Vietnamese Family Structures
 - 1. Hierarchical Church and Authority
 - 2. Protocols and Forms of Address
 - 3. Extended Family Relations
 - 4. Multi-generational Families
 - C. Transition from a Minority Newcomer to a Majority Resident
 - 1. From being Sideline Bystanders to Mainline Prime-timers
 - 2. "Ghetto" Mentality (stay in comfort zone) to More Integrative Mentality
 - 3. Receiving (Passive) Church to the Giving (Active) Church
 - D. New Environment Challenging Old Systems of Thought
 - 1. Passive / Aggressive Mentality: Anonymous Giving, yet somehow longing to be Recognized
 - 2. Mis-quoting of Scripture (e.g., Matt 6:3 ...don't let your left hand what your right hand is doing)
 - 3. Avoiding Responsibility: don't know how to speak and write English (i.e. go to English Mass to avoid Vietnamese clergy) manage bank accounts, but are very resourceful in other areas of business and social needs
 - 4. More familiar with Cash system (based on lack of trust in government and financial institutions in Vietnam); however, mentality remains despite settling in a new environment
- II. Present Situation of Stewardship within the Vietnamese Community
 - A. Secular Life
 - 1. Responding and Adapting to Individual/ Family Needs (Family-centric; Confucian Principles)
 - 2. Professional Roles and Responsibilities with Financial Incentives
 - 3. Resourceful in Fulfilling Requirements: Academic Opportunities, Grants, Scholarships, SSI, Insurance Claims
 - B. Church and Parish Life
 - 1. Attending Church out of Obligation and Tradition
 - 2. Fulfilling Personal Spiritual needs while avoiding Communal Responsibility and Involvement
 - 3. Stewardship as a Terminology is a Foreign Concept
 - 4. Stewardship is a code word for MONEY, not a way of Christian Living
 - 5. Stewardship is mainly the Clergy's Responsibility
 - C. What does Stewardship mean to the Vietnamese Community?
 - 1. Attempting to Define Stewardship: Way of Christian Living; Seeking to Give; Out of Generosity
 - 2. Beyond Semantics and Literal Translations: Nguoi Quan Ly (better translation?)
 - 3. Recognizing Stewardship Already Present within the Community: Stewardship not simply

identified with MONEY, but should also be presented when it comes to other areas of ministries, family and parish life as well

D. How do the Vietnamese Respond to the Call to Live Stewardship in their Parishes?

E. Personal Invitation to Stewardship from Pastors/ Priests

F. Navigating the Elder (Gate keepers) and Rank System

III. Two Perspectives on the Approach toward Stewardship

Fr. Tuyen Nguyen, Pastor of St. Callistus at Christ Cathedral, Garden Grove, CA

1. Founded: (1961) Callistus; (2013) Christ Cathedral
2. Demographics of Parish (50% Latinos; 35% Vietnamese; 15% Other/Mixed)
3. Registered Families: 2900
4. Trilingual Community (Vietnamese, Spanish, English)
5. Number of Different Organizations from various Cultural/Ethnic Groups:
 - a. 20 Vietnamese
 - b. 20 Spanish
 - c. 10 English
6. Example of Stewardship: Family sit together in Church; children are taught to contribute; first immigrants are supporting the Church because of their own experience in paying mortgages, rent, and bills; women are more visible in ministerial positions; incentives mentality applied (St. Barbara); National Pride (St. Patrick, San Jose with name change to Our Lady of La Vang); familiarity with bequests, wills, and endowments; from church volunteers to paid positions in parishes; recognition of donors are very important (plaques); children give to the church to honor parents and as tax write-off; elders still support the Church in Vietnam with their contributions

A. Fr. Bill Cao: Parochial Vicar from St. Justin Martyr Church, Anaheim, CA

1. Founded: 1958
2. Demographics of Parish (70%: Latinos; 20% Others (Anglos, Filipinos, Sri Lankans, Chinese, Tongans, Vietnamese, Indians)
3. Registered Families: about 4,500
4. Multi-lingual Community (mainly Spanish & English)
5. Number of Different Organizations from various Cultural/Ethnic Groups
 - a. 20 Spanish Groups and Organizations
 - b. 40 English speaking Groups and Organizations
6. Example of Stewardship:
 - a. Inviting Parishioners from all ethnic groups to work together (Thanksgiving Feast, Simbang Gabi, Our Lady of Guadalupe, Lunar New Year, Parish Picnic, etc.)
 - b. Challenging people to offer of their time and talents
 - c. Creative and Realistic Opportunities to Fundraise within the respective communities

IV. Challenging the Vietnamese Mentality toward Stewardship

A. Exploring Stewardship from a Vietnamese Cultural Perspective: Passive vs. Proactive

B. From a Critical to a Supportive/ Nurturing Community of Stewardship

C. Out of Obedience and Obligation to a Promoter of Stewardship

D. Domino Effect from lack of Response within the Parishes (burden with schools)

E. More Support for Priests, Nuns, and Institutions in Vietnam than needs of Parishes abroad

V. How to Connect or Bridge Stewardship within the Vietnamese Community

A. Naming Stewardship within the Vietnamese Community (recognize what is already present)

B. Claiming Stewardship: Ownership (my contribution envelope; our parish)

C. Proclaiming Stewardship: Pride (contagious spirit of Stewardship)

D. Formation and Development

1. Teaching Stewardship within the Vietnamese Community (seek out Wisdom Figures)
2. Leadership Training Opportunities (invest in leadership within the parish)

E. Planned Giving

1. Tithing (increase envelope usage)
2. Endowments, Bequests, Wills, Stocks and Bonds (ideal)

F. Building upon Legacy and Tradition

1. Vision for the Future Generations of Vietnamese
2. Children Give to Honor Parents

VI. Questions and Answers Period