

Stewardship Prayer

God my Creator,
you made me all that I am
and gave me all that I have.
Help me show my gratitude
by using these gifts
to serve others in your name.

Jesus my Redeemer,
you taught me the way to eternal life
by your example of loving service to others.
Grant me the courage to respond
to your call to Discipleship
by following in your footsteps.

Holy Spirit of God,
be with me as I choose each day
to put you first in my life.
Let me be a model of Christian Stewardship
so others will come to know you
through my actions.

I pray, dear Lord,
that you open the minds and hearts
of all the men, women
and young people of our parish,
that we may joyfully accept your challenge
to be good stewards.

Amen.



Orange Catholic Foundation
Parish Stewardship
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Stewardship

Our Response to God's Generosity

**"Put your gifts at the service of one another
as good stewards of God's varied grace."
(1 Peter 4:10)**

What is a Christian Steward?

A steward is someone who takes care of what belongs to someone else, like an administrator or trustee not an owner. Christian stewards recognize that everything really belongs to God - everything we are and everything we have - and that God will hold us accountable for how we use the many gifts He has entrusted to our care.

If we truly believe this and experience a conversion of heart, we can't help but respond with profound gratitude. This gratitude is expressed in our celebration of the Eucharist (the very word means thanks) and in the way we live our everyday lives.

What does it mean to live the Stewardship way of life?

The Stewardship way of life is a biblically based Catholic spirituality. Living each day as a good steward means answering our own personal call from Jesus Christ to be his disciple; following his example of loving service to others.

In their Pastoral Letter "Stewardship: A Disciple's Response", the American Bishops describe a Christian steward as:

"One who receives God's gifts gratefully, cherishes and tends them in a responsible and accountable manner, shares them in justice and love with others, and returns them with increase to the Lord."

Gifts from God are not meant to be kept only for our own use, but to be shared with others so everyone has a share in God's abundant graces.

St. Francis of Assisi said, *"Hold back nothing of yourselves so that He who gives Himself totally to you may receive you fully."*

Stewardship is not a program,
It is a way of life

Stewardship is not an activity,
It is an attitude

Stewardship is not the latest fad,
It is biblically based

Stewardship is not a way to raise money,
It is a way to attain holiness

Stewardship is not just a decision
of the head,
It requires a conversion of the heart

Stewardship is not a topic to learn,
It is a process of becoming

Stewardship is not an option,
It is integral to our Catholic faith

Stewardship is not another thing to do,
It is why and how we do what we do

Stewardship is not about our generosity,
*It is about our response to God's
generosity*

**Stewardship is what you do
after you say, "I Believe."**

How are We Tending the many Gifts God has Given Us?

A grateful disciple develops God's gifts to their full potential, shares them generously with others and lovingly uses them to serve others.

Our Gift of Life

Good stewards take good care of their health. Giving blood is a priceless way to share the gift of life, without strings. Stewards also uphold the dignity of life in others, including the unborn, the disabled, the aged and those on death row.

Our Gift of Faith

Good stewards continue to develop the precious gift of Faith with life-long study and reflection - utilizing classes, reading, retreats, bible study and faith sharing groups. Sharing the gift of Faith with others, what we call evangelization, occurs when we pass on our Faith to family, friends, and co-workers and to students as a Catechist.

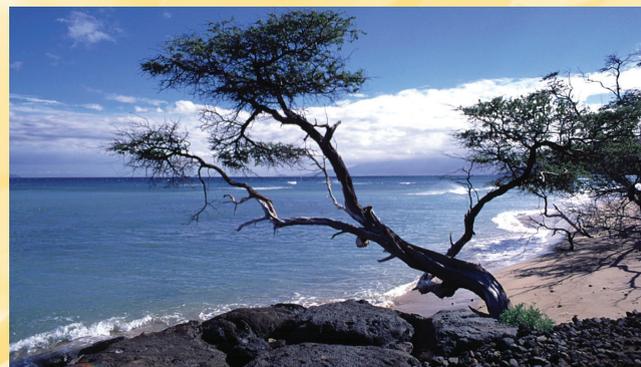
Our Gift of Time

Putting time for prayer first in our busy lives is a way to return the first fruits of this treasured gift to God. Making time for the people we love and care about is also good stewardship, as is the gift of our presence at the Eucharist and at parish and community activities.



Our Gift of the Environment

The earth and all it holds have been entrusted to our care. Good stewards show respect for the land and the creatures God made, and care for it so it can also be enjoyed by future generations.



Our Gift of Finances

Christian stewards realize that all our earthly possessions come from God and are entrusted to our care for the greater good of all, not just for our own needs and wants. Good stewards make donating to the church, the poor and other charities an act of worship, an expression of gratitude to God based on the trust that He will provide all that we need.

Our Gift of Vocations

Whether we build things, care for people, create designs or provide a service we are sharing in God's gift of creation. Good stewards apply their vocations at work, in the home, in the parish and in the community to the best of their ability, as well as encourage vocations to the priesthood and religious life.

Our Gift of Relationships

Everyone we love and everyone who loves us was brought into our lives by God. Good stewards thank God for the people in their lives and lovingly nurture those relationships, seeing Jesus in the face of all.

Our Gifts of Talent

Our aptitudes and abilities, interests and passions, skills and experiences are gifts unique to each person. We all have received gifts of our head and hands, spirits and personalities that make us who we are. No matter how limited we feel our talents are, if we generously use them to serve others, God will make them "enough" to accomplish great things. Recall how God made the unselfish gift of a few loaves and fishes enough to serve the multitudes!



**It was not you who chose me;
it was I who chose you
to go forth and bear fruit."
(John 15:16)**

How can I better Steward these Gifts?

1. Christian stewards reflect gratefully on their unique gifts, and *prayerfully* decide how to use them in a way pleasing to God. They make a deliberate plan for sharing their gifts with others, putting God first. "*Honor the Lord with the first fruits of all you produce*". (Proverbs 11:24) This stewardship plan must be renewed each year to reflect changing life circumstances.
2. Christian stewards respond to God's love in *proportion* to how they have been blessed. "*Return to God according to the measure you have received.*" (Luke 6:38)
3. Good stewards make *sacrificial* gifts, gifts made "sacred" by using them in ways that change the lifestyle of the giver as well as the life of the recipient. "*Do not neglect good deeds and generosity. God is pleased by sacrifice of that kind.*" (Hebrews 13:16)

Some examples of being a good steward:

- Praying every day
- Making time for family a priority
- Driving an elderly person to church
- Supporting your church in a planned and sacrificial way
- Reading the Bible
- Being a catechist
- Joining your neighborhood watch group
- Being helpful to parents around the house
- Studying the issues and candidates and voting
- Recycling
- Making regular donations to the poor