

## Stewardship and Young Adults

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### ***An Invitation to Help Change the World***

This is a call to young adults everywhere to renew the face of the Earth. This is a call to listen to the voice of the Spirit speaking of *gratitude* and *responsibility*. This is an invitation to Catholic stewardship.

#### **What Is Catholic Stewardship?**

Stewardship is not simply making donations or taking care of the building and grounds.

It is a spirituality—hence a way of life—made of four parts:

- Receiving the gifts of God with gratitude
- Cultivating them responsibly
- Sharing them lovingly in justice with others
- Standing before the Lord in a spirit of accountability

It is up to you to determine how you will live out this stewardship way of life. You will not be alone, however. Millions of fellow Catholics are traveling together with you.

#### **The Gifts of God**

Think of God's gifts in broader terms, not simply the material goods or security you may enjoy. These are gifts, too:

- Your faith, hope, love, and joy
- Your family love and relationships with others
- Your intelligence, talents, and skills
- Your imagination, compassion, and vision
- Creation in all its splendor

Our Catholic tradition teaches us that with so many blessings come great challenges. At all times in our lives, we have an opportunity—and a responsibility—to share what we have been given.

#### **Jesus Is the Steward**

It begins with remembering our Baptism, when we became followers of Jesus Christ. From this call flows the commitment to Christ that makes stewardship possible—and deeply rewarding. However, this is a commitment to a lifetime of action, and it requires sacrifice.

Through following Christ, we have the benefit of the role model of sacrifice for the greater good, a model of self-giving and loving service.

#### **Hearing and Responding to the Call**

Everyone has a *calling*, which is another way of saying that your walk with God is personal. When you hear the call to *gratitude* and *responsibility*—in your friendships and family, in your work, wherever you go—then taking the next step to answer that call is where Catholic stewardship may be clearly seen.

And in our faith, that response happens in a wonderfully rich, vibrant community of diverse and talented individuals. We are all encouraged to consider responding generously to God's call to a priestly or religious vocation, as well as to the single or married life.

#### **What Does a Catholic Steward Look Like?**

Catholic stewards take care of the world around us, including embracing the social teaching of the Church.

- We work as partners with God in the redemption of the world.
- We respect human life and dignity.
- We protect the natural environment.
- We share our gifts (time, talents, and treasures) with others.
- We communicate our enthusiasm.

For your own development as a Catholic steward, it helps to spend time in prayer and reflection to recognize your gifts from God. Then discover how best to use those gifts for the benefit of others—and of course, invite others to discern and

share their gifts, too.

### The Challenges and Rewards of Stewardship

It is an incredible challenge to live in imitation of the life of Christ. We all face obstacles, opportunities, and challenges, living in a fast-paced environment with many responsibilities. Our spiritual hunger does not always get a chance to be nourished through prayer and action.

However, a clear sense of purpose—nourished by the Eucharist and our rich Catholic tradition—opens the door for us to actively commit to a life of gratitude and responsibility; to thank God for his endless gifts, and then to decide what we can do to help the world. The rewards include:

- Making a difference in people's lives
- Becoming an active member of a fulfilling Catholic community
- Discovering talents inside you, waiting to be used
- Letting go of your worries and setting realistic goals in both your spiritual and secular life
- Experiencing the amazing increase in God's presence that comes with a partnership with the Lord

### To Learn More

We invite you to speak with your pastor and parish leaders. Read our pastoral letter *Stewardship: A Disciple's Response*, available by calling 800-235-8722 or online at [www.usccb.org](http://www.usccb.org). You may also want to go to your diocesan website or the International Catholic Stewardship Council ([www.catholicstewardship.org](http://www.catholicstewardship.org)). Look for new opportunities to discuss stewardship with others. And keep listening to the stirrings of your own heart.

We look forward to journeying together.

### Reflection Questions

1. What resources, talents, and abilities has God given me? Do I use them in service to others? How might I take the next step to become a more effective steward?
2. What qualities in the life of Jesus provide a model for living and an example of good stewardship? How might they compare to my own life and lived experience?
3. If I am to work to be an effective Christian steward, with the help of God's grace, what will it cost me in terms of personal sacrifice and hardship? Am I willing to take the next step?
4. How am I reaching out to invite others to recognize their gifts? What opportunities do I provide for them to employ those gifts for the good of the community?

#### Change the World

"I am convinced that if we can make stewardship part of our faith life we can truly change the world. We can make this a much better place in which to live—not just for us, but for everyone. I am convinced of this because I am convinced that it will attack the selfishness that besets all of us. It turns the mine to *ours*; it turns self to *others*. It turns us from just loving ourselves to loving others as Jesus loves them."

Bishop John J. McRaith  
Diocese of Owensboro, Kentucky

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Msgr. William P. Fay  
General Secretary, USCCB

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