

THE SPIRITUALITY OF STEWARDSHIP

In this article, guest writer Deacon Harold Burke-Sivers discusses the Christian principle of stewardship and its immense significance as a way of life for Catholics.



The word “stewardship” sometimes evokes negative feelings in the Church. It seems that as soon as a priest mentions “stewardship”, people automatically think, “Uh-oh, he’s going to ask for money again”. But stewardship is so much more than simply “money”: time, talent, and treasure are spiritual principles rooted in Scripture, and give authentic expression and witness to our lives as Catholics.

of Mass, strengthened by the Eucharist, we go forth in freedom and love to be “Eucharist” to others: to be living signs and witnesses of the Father’s love to the world. The stewardship of love rooted in the Sacrament of Charity means that we must be a self-gift; we must completely sacrifice ourselves for the sake of others and so enter more deeply into the life of Christ.

The stewardship of love

heaven means that we must turn away from materiality in our own lives—everything, without exception—from our jobs to our favorite television show; from our cars to our reputations; from a vacation getaway to our own pride: we must prefer absolutely nothing to the love of Christ. Our following Jesus has to be totally and absolutely unconditional! How can we do this? Here are a few suggestions.

We are merely stewards of His gifts. Be good stewards of the precious gift of your time by getting more involved in the life of the archdiocese, regularly attending Eucharistic adoration, and taking time to pray together as a family. Be good stewards of your talents by asking the Lord to help you identify your gifts and use them to strengthen the life of the archdiocese according to His holy will. Be good stewards of your treasure by financially supporting the archdiocese, not out of guilt or fear or even sense of obligation, but out of gratitude to God for His generosity to us. It is only then, in the total offering of ourselves in love to the Other—in the sublime moment of complete giftedness—that we can we say with Saint Paul, “I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me,” for it is in giving ourselves away in love that we truly find ourselves in God.

1. Recognize that you have something to offer, no matter how small and insignificant your gift may seem to you or anyone else.
2. Acknowledge that you cannot accomplish anything on your own.
3. Acknowledge that your offering (the gift of your life) will not grow and thrive unless you give it Jesus!
4. After blessing the offering of your life, share your gifts with the world, and not keep it to yourself (remember the Parable of the Talents?).

Living an authentic life of stewardship acknowledges that we belong to God. Giving ourselves to Him completely is a labour of love that requires deep faith and enduring hope. We have to take our hands off the steering wheel and let God drive. In the Holy Spirit and with great conviction, let us be good stewards by giving the Lord glory and honour, for He is our God and there is no other.

My brothers and sisters in Christ, everything in this world belongs to the Lord.

AUTHENTIC STEWARDSHIP IS AN EXTENSION OF THE CHURCH’S EUCHARISTIC LIFE AND MISSION.

The commitment to stewardship is not expressed in a single act or gift, or even in a number of actions or gifts over time, but by an entire way of life. Stewardship means committing our entire selves to the Lord. Being a good steward means removing all obstacles that prohibit us from loving God alone and, in doing so, making ourselves vulnerable before the God who made us. It means emptying ourselves so that God can fill us. It means exposing the weakest parts of who we are so that God can make us strong. It means becoming blind to the ways of the world so that Christ can lead us.

Authentic stewardship is an extension of the Church’s Eucharistic life and mission. At the end

revealed in the Eucharistic Mystery means that our love must be permanent, because God will not accept anything less than our total, complete, and life-long commitment to serving Him. The stewardship of love in Communion means that our love must be life-giving, that every act of love must necessarily be an intimate partnership of life and love, for our God is not a God of sterility and death: He is the Lord and Giver of life.

Giving “to God what belongs to God” in stewardship means that we must be willing to give up everything that we have determined to be important in this life, everything that keeps us from making our personal relationship with Jesus Christ the single most important priority of our lives. Building up treasure in



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Deacon Harold Burke-Sivers is the host of several

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