

Stewardship

Article 6 of 8

In this reflection, I would like to continue on with the stewardship series, which I began several months ago. Over the previous months we have pondered the nature of stewardship, including its essential meaning and the necessity of receiving God's gifts to us with gratitude. Only after considering stewardship in the context of receiving gifts from God can we begin any sort of discussion of our specific response in the form of time, talent and treasure.

This week we will consider the theme of talent. Talent in the context of stewardship concerns the gifts that God has given to us. Talents are the particular abilities and strengths that God has given to us in order to further his Kingdom on earth. In other words, any ability or strength we possess that is capable of helping the plight of our neighbor or their relationship with God serves to further the Kingdom of Christ.

The use of our particular talents for furthering the Kingdom demands that we first be cognizant of our specific abilities and strengths. Awareness of our gifts was considered earlier in my reflections on the nature of stewardship. Humility demands that we recognize and appreciate our abilities and strengths. We must reject the false humility that minimizes anything good or positive in the human person. Remember, when we acknowledge the positive within ourselves and others, we are not acting in pride. Rather, we are giving God his due for the blessings we possess.

Putting our talents into action

We must take our talents and put them into action. In consideration of the stewardship way of life, the Lord calls us to identify the needs in our parish community and promptly present ourselves for service when the specific need matches our talents. Consequently, if the parish is in need of a person with organizational skills for a special project and I possess organizational talent, then it is very possible that God may be calling me to present my talents. Moreover, if the parish is in need of teachers for Sunday catechism class, but I possess little ability and passion for teaching, then certainly God is not calling me to assist in this specific area.

If you are ever in question of finding a need to serve with your talents, you can always call the parish office. Trust me, there are plenty.

A contemporary challenge to the use of our talents: Over-commitment

Many of us live lives of over-commitment. There are many demands and opportunities available to us every day. Furthermore, the majority of these opportunities are good in themselves. Before long, we find ourselves strained and stressed with more commitments than we can legitimately handle. This leaves little for the service of God and His Church, specifically our parish community.

The result is that the life of the parish suffers, and when the life of the parish suffers, the mission of Christ stalls. Priests find themselves calling on the same people's talents over and over to assist the parish community in her many needs. A problem that almost always leads to burnout.

In these demanding times, we must prioritize our commitments so that the needs of the Church are not compromised. Everyone has talents that are meant to further the Kingdom of God. Moreover, everyone suffers when we fail to put our talents at the service of God and neighbor in the stewardship way of life. Today is a great time for refocusing ourselves in a way that makes us more available to use our talents for the needs of the church.

In Christ's Love,
Fr. Steve