

We have come to the last week of Stewardship Month at St. Mark's. I'd like to say a few words to wrap it up. Let's begin with the question, "What Does a Catholic Steward Look Like?"

- Catholic stewards take care of the world around us, loving God and neighbor, and embracing the social teaching of the Church.
- A good steward works as a partner with God in the redemption of the world.
- A good steward respects human life and dignity.
- A good steward protects the natural environment and world God has entrusted to us.
- A good steward shares in equal parts the gifts of time, talent, and treasure they have received from God.
- A good steward gives generously with the Church out of gratitude for God's generosity to us.

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 the Church—and of course, invite others to discern and share their gifts, too.

It is an incredible challenge to live discipleship--- 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

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

Stewardship is a complete lifestyle, a life of total accountability and responsibility acknowledging God as Creator and Owner of all.

In recognition of our starting point which began with signing up for our liturgical ministries which support our celebration of the Holy Mass, we will bless and commission today all those to serve our community out of their time and talent:

Presider: Among the symbols with which liturgy deals, one of the most important is the action of the community assembled together. Priest, Deacon, Altar Server, Eucharistic Minister, Lector, Musician, Usher & Greeters, the person in the front pew to the person standing in the back of the church, all have their important role in celebrating Christ's healing presence in our midst. Liturgy is something done by the whole community. Today we want to ask God to bless in a special way all our Liturgical Ministers at St. Mark the Evangelist Catholic Church.

- I invite **all** Lectors, Ministers of Communion, Musicians and singers, Ushers and Ministers of Hospitality and all Altar Servers who are present here today to stand.

I invite you to respond "I am," to the following question.

To those of you who are called to be Lectors:

The Word of God proclaimed at liturgy enlightens our hearts and minds. When scriptures are read in the liturgical assembly, God speaks to us and calls us to respond in faith and love.

Are you resolved to proclaim this Word in faith, desiring to pattern your life after it's teaching?

I am.

To you who have accepted the call to be Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion:

In this ministry you will be entrusted with offering your brothers and sisters the food of life and some in bringing the love of this community and the healing presence of Christ to those who are sick.

Are you resolved to offer the Holy Eucharist with utmost care and reverence, striving yourself to grow in holiness through this sacrament of unity and love?

I am.

To you who are called to the ministry of music:

The power of music draws us into deeper union with the divine. The gift of your voices and instruments enhances and enriches our time of worship. Are you resolved to grow in your understanding of Christ's promises so that they may echo always in the music you create?

I am.

To you who are called to the ministry of usher and hospitality:

Liturgy flourishes in a climate of hospitality. Jesus was the one who welcomed all.

Are you resolved to extend to all who come here the welcome of church and to assist them in their important role as participants?

I am.

To you who are Altar Servers:

The mysteries of our faith come alive in our ritual. Your role of assisting the presider of the liturgy is one of great importance.

Are you resolved to be faithful to your commitment and reverent in fulfilling your role?

I am.

Presider: As a sign of our commitment I invite the Liturgical Ministers and the Assembly to stand, and to profess together our faith. I ask you all to respond "We do believe," to each part of the Creed.

Do you believe in God, the Father Almighty, creator of heaven and earth?

Assembly & Ministers: We do believe.

Presider: Do you believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord, who was born of the Virgin Mary, was crucified, died, and was buried, rose from the dead, and is now seated at the right hand of the Father?

Assembly & Ministers: We do believe.

Presider: Do you believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the dead, and life everlasting?

Assembly & Ministers: We do believe.

Presider: I invite the assembly to in prayer as we ask God's blessing.

God of Glory,
your beloved Son has shown us that true worship comes from humble,
trusting, faith-filled hearts.

Bless our brothers and sisters who have
responded to the needs of our faith community
and wish to commit themselves to your service as liturgical ministers.
Grant that their ministry may be fruitful and our worship pleasing to you.

We ask this in the name of the Father, ☩ and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

All: Amen