

FAITHFUL AND PRUDENT STEWARDS

Who, then, is the faithful and prudent steward...? (Lk 12:42 a). Jesus calls his disciples to be good Stewards of the gifts God has given to us. Being a faithful and prudent steward is our response to his call to discipleship. Discipleship and Stewardship are founded on a personal relationship with Jesus. Because Jesus is a loving companion who accompanies us through the good times and the hard times of life's journey, we share an intimate relationship with him. We are partners with Jesus who is the center of our lives. The love between Jesus and us is a mutual relationship. Because we love him, he is the greatest priority in our lives and we focus our entire lives on Him. We center our whole family life on Jesus so that there is no division between our love for God and love for our family members. In the vocation of marriage, our spouse and children are the primary gifts that God gives us and through whom he expresses his love for us. The mission of stewardship extends beyond us and our families to our Church and to our society. A personal relationship with Jesus animates us to be his intentional disciples and to respond as good stewards of our God-given gifts of Time, Talent and Treasure. These are three distinct ways that we as Catholics participate in our parish life. All three are essential and one is not a substitute for the others. Our Stewardship of Time refers primarily to our Spiritual Life of *Growing in our Relationship to God*. This includes regular Sunday Mass, the Sacraments, Daily Prayer and our devotional practices. Our Stewardship of Talent refers primarily to the abilities we use in *Ministering with our Gifts of Service*. This includes Liturgical Ministries, teaching in the Lifelong Formation program for children and adults, volunteering at parish social events and working on parish committees. Our Stewardship of Treasure refers primarily to giving financial resources in *Supporting the Mission of our Parish*. This is the Biblical injunction of Tithing 10% of our family income. Referring to priestly service in the Old Testament, we read *I have assigned to them as their heritage the tithes which the Israelites give as a contribution to the Lord....* (Num 18:24). *With each contribution show a cheerful countenance, and pay your tithes in a spirit of joy.* (Sir 35:8). In the New Testament, Jesus exhorts: *Give and gifts will be given to you....For the measure with which you measure will in return be measured out to you.* (Lk 6:38). He also places these words on the lips of a tax collector: *I fast twice a week, and I pay tithes on my whole income.* (Lk 18:12). For a balanced way of Tithing, our faith standard is to tithe 5% to our parish, 4% to a charity of choice or to our parish development projects or Catholic Schools, and 1% to our Bishop for the Annual Diocesan Appeal. We want you to fall in love with your parish and to invest in it. We know that this involves a sacrifice for you so that we can pay our weekly bills as you do in your homes. Tithing 5% of the financial resources is a very important sacrifice that you make to God. Perhaps you have not yet started tithing. The important thing is: you can get started. The best way to begin is by giving a fixed percentage of your income on a weekly basis to our parish. Begin by giving 1 or 2% of your income and then increase this percentage each year until you reach the 5% level. All belongs to God and we all belong to Christ. As Job says: *Naked I came forth from my mother's womb, and naked shall I go back again.* Please remember that our parish is unable to record your tithe if you simply drop cash into the collection basket. We recommend Electronic Banking so that you will not forget your tithe. Call the office today for assistance. Besides it saves our parish the expense of sending out envelopes to you each month. The Stewardship of Time, Talent and Treasure challenges all of us to give back to God the first fruits of what God has given to us.