

# PARISH STEWARDSHIP

Education and Services Committee e-Bulletin • January 2008



## FOR PARISH OR SMALL GROUP GATHERINGS

### Prayer at the Beginning of a New Year

Gracious and Loving God,  
The old year has passed and  
a new year begun.

We thank you for Your active  
presence in our busy lives,  
for the opportunities given,  
and for blessings received.

As we embrace a new year,  
Breathe freely through us  
And renew our spirits  
With fresh resolve and purpose.

Give us the grace to be good stewards  
Of all that You have entrusted to us  
And to serve You with  
Generous, compassionate  
And loving hearts.

Bless our days ahead.  
Give us the courage to be faithful.  
And show us how to  
proclaim the Good News  
of Your Son, Jesus Christ  
who lives and reigns with You  
and the Holy Spirit,  
One God  
forever and ever.

Amen.

## “Making All Things New”: Stewardship and New Year’s Resolutions

Stewardship is a commitment of mind and heart to the Lord; a way of life that needs constant renewal and transformation. This time of year has always been one of looking forward to a new year, reflecting on the changes we need to make in our lives and resolving to follow through on those changes. Perhaps those who seek to make resolutions to be better stewards might find inspiration in the following samples:

**Stewardship of Prayer:** Resolve to strengthen your relationship with the Lord. Notice how often you pray and what hinders you from praying. Commit to short, daily prayer times.



**Stewardship of Family:** Resolve to set aside more time to stay connected with your family. Eat dinner together, schedule regular dates with your spouse, plan family outings, and go to Mass together.

**Stewardship of Health:** Resolve to get those medical and dental checkups. Adopt healthier eating habits. Add exercise and other physical activity to your daily routine.

**Stewardship of Possessions:** Resolve to possess a little more “lightly” this year. Consider ways you can reduce the amount of all that stuff you own. Distinguish between those items that are necessary and those that are considered luxurious and unnecessary.

**Stewardship of the Parish Family:** Resolve to serve your faith community in some way this year such as at liturgy, in the parish’s outreach or education and formation efforts.

**Stewardship of Money:** Resolve to render sacred your annual budget. Reprioritize your financial goals to ensure that the Lord comes first in your spending. Take positive steps to improve your financial health.

**Stewardship of Work:** Resolve to be faithful to your daily, work-related tasks and offer them up to the Lord. Cultivate your skills. Deepen your knowledge. Be mindful of how you are building the Kingdom of God.



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**Stewardship of Mind:** Resolve to keep your mind active. Commit to being more informed on the issues of the day. Read your bible. In this year of presidential elections in the United States, familiarize yourself with the Church's social teachings.

**Stewardship of Neighbor:** Resolve to be a person of hospitality; to make time and space for others who enter your life. Be more aware of those times when a neighbor, co-worker, fellow parishioner or stranger, needs a moment of kindness, a little attention or an affirming gesture on your part.

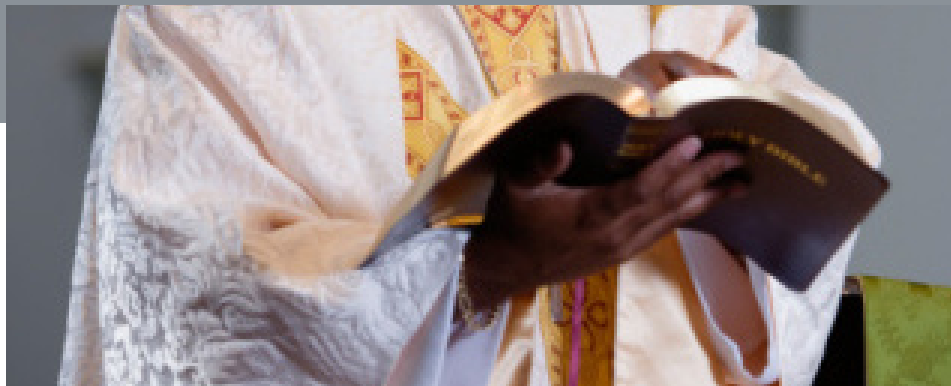
**Stewardship of the Poor:** Resolve to live with more compassion and in solidarity with those less fortunate. Remember the poor in prayer, and commit to helping relieve in some way the plight of those who are impoverished or marginalized.

We encourage you to check out the ICSC Forum at [www.catholicstewardship.org](http://www.catholicstewardship.org) under 'members' where members can share ideas and questions. The Parish Stewardship section is reviewed every day by members of the Parish Stewardship Education and Services Committee.

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## STEWARDSHIP MOMENTS

### (For the weekend of January 5/6)

The magi opened their treasures before Jesus, our newborn King, offering him gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh. This first weekend of the year is an ideal time to take inventory of the abundant gifts the Lord has bestowed upon us and our families, and to reflect on how we can use those gifts to serve the Lord during the year ahead.

### (For the weekend of January 12/13)

The baptism of Jesus by John in the River Jordan is an expression of God's active presence revealed through His Son. Today, the sacrament of Baptism empowers us to exercise good stewardship of God's loving presence in the world as well. In what way will we reveal God's presence to others this week?

### (For the weekend of January 19/20)

St. Paul urges the Christian community at Corinth to be united with other Christian communities. Christian stewards cultivate solidarity and hospitality among all Christians. So, during this Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, it is appropriate to pray that all communities who follow Christ might be brought together into one Confession of Faith.

### (For the weekend of January 26/27)

Evangelization is an important theme in today's readings. Jesus proclaims the Gospel in Galilee. St. Paul writes of being sent by Christ to preach the Gospel. Proclaiming the Good News by our daily pattern of living is key to Christian stewardship. As the practice of stewardship leads to evangelization, in what ways can we evangelize to friends, neighbors and even family members through our daily pattern of living?

### (For the weekend of February 2/3)

Jesus went up a mountain to preach a new way of living to his followers. He begins this "Sermon on the Mount" with a proclamation of the Beatitudes; lessons on discipleship and stewardship that continue to turn society's values upside down. Living a life of Christian stewardship includes constantly re-examining our daily actions in the light of the Beatitudes so that we may live more authentically as disciples of the Lord.