

# Stewardship: Growing in gratitude through prayer

Scripture reminds us that we are one church with many gifts. Each person's gifts and the gifts of every family and faith community are distinct and have been given to serve the body of Christ.

It is a vital principle of our faith that what we have received we must also share for the good of all. To a very great extent, Scripture is the story of God's generosity poured out to the people and God's call to share what has been received.

As parishes in the Archdiocese of Seattle conduct their parish stewardship campaigns, we all are asked to consider this basic characteristic of our story: God gives it all to us and then calls us to share it.

Sharing our monetary gifts is essential to the vitality of our parishes and their ministries, so I hope you have prayerfully considered your family's parish stewardship pledge and responded with generosity. If you haven't done so yet, I urge you to make a pledge to share a portion of your treasure as an expression of your faith, hope and love.

## Stewardship takes discernment

Money, however, is just one of the many gifts we are called to share. There is much more to Christian stewardship

than just monetary giving, and it takes discernment to fully appropriate this concept. Earlier this year, I asked the parishes of our Archdiocese to participate in a year of discernment to determine what steps they can take to make stewardship a way of life in each parish and among the Catholic people of our Archdiocese.



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In response, many parishes placed a special emphasis on the stewardship of time this year. These parishes asked parishioners to make a different kind of commitment, a pledge of time to put greater emphasis on prayer, worship and efforts to nurture their spiritual life.

This is an appropriate way to engage parishes in our Archdiocesan Stewardship Plan and to begin a broad conversation about this principle of our faith. It will encourage parishes to adopt

stewardship as a way of life and also invites each Catholic person to join in the process.

The call to deeper conversion lies at the heart of my ministry as archbishop and the ministry of priests, religious and lay people to baptized Catholics. To a very great extent, the path to deeper conversion is grounded in gratitude,

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and gratitude is one of the basic principles of stewardship.

## Grounded in gratitude

When we recognize that everything we have — our faith, our families, possessions and even our next breath — are gifts freely given by God for no purpose other than to demonstrate God's love for us, we begin to appropriate an authentic attitude of Christian gratitude. But in our individualistic and secular culture it is easy to overlook this most basic truth and to place our trust in self

sufficiency instead.

Because it is not reflexive to adopt a proper attitude of gratitude for our complete dependence on God, we need to be intentional about carving out time in our busy lives for prayer, Scripture reading and reflection on our relationship with God.

For those who make such a commitment, one of the first fruits is a deeper sense of gratitude and a growing recognition of our need to respond as stewards for the immense love God has shown for us.

During this year of discernment, I will offer stewardship reflections periodically to draw attention to the many facets of stewardship. My hope is that our parishes and people will reflect on what they have already done to make stewardship a way of life, what they are doing now and what efforts might be appropriate in the future.

I am confident that this time of prayerful reflection will bring about a deeper conversion and a growing understanding that God gives it all and that we are called to share in gratitude. In this spirit, a spirit of true stewardship, we may be confident that our many gifts are building the one body of Christ in the Archdiocese of Seattle for the praise and honor of our good and generous God.