

## Sample Homily #1 for the Total Stewardship Effort

*The following presentation serves as an example.*

In the first letter of St. Peter, he reminds us, "As each one has received a gift, use it to serve one another as good stewards of God's varied grace." Throughout Holy Scripture, there are constant reminders that we are called to be stewards of all of God's gifts... Our time, our talents, our financial resources, our communities, the earth we live on with its natural resources, and our relationships with family and all those around us. We must truly recognize that everything belongs to God, and we are stewards or caretakers who are expected to use the gifts in service to one another. Simply put, stewardship is about how we use those gifts.

Today, we are beginning a stewardship effort here at our parish. It is an important and significant event in our parish life. It is one that will change the lives of each of us and which will change the life of our parish.

At the end of the three-week stewardship effort, you will be asked to make a specific commitment to our parish of your time, your talent, and your treasure. We ask for your commitment in writing for each of these important elements of stewardship. And, we will ask you to return your commitment cards on Commitment Sunday.

In the meanwhile, you will hear from (or have heard from) two of our parishioners about how stewardship affects their lives. This week, I am happy to announce that you will hear from (or have heard from)\* (name of presenter). And next week our presenter will be (name). We thank both of these parishioners for their act of stewardship in standing before our parish and sharing with us how stewardship is affecting their lives. *\*(The Lay Witness presentation may be done either before the processional at the beginning of Mass or after Communion.)*

We greatly appreciate their willingness to come forward and explain stewardship because, for many Catholics, it is a misunderstood concept. This is one of the reasons why you received a mailing this week and will be receiving two more over the next two weeks. Please read the letters and brochures when they arrive at your home.

Stewardship is based on the spiritual principles of the Old Testament and the teachings of Christ. Stewardship is a way of life. It is a way of thanking God for all His blessings by returning a portion of the Time, Talent, and Treasure allotted to us.

We are asking all of you to spend the next two weeks praying and thinking about the true meaning of stewardship and how it can impact your life. For individuals, it means thinking about stewardship and the commitments we make. For others, it means having a discussion with family members about the family's total stewardship commitment. In either case, we are asked to look at stewardship as the joyful return to God of the first fruits of what He has bestowed upon us.

In Stewardship of Time and Talent, we are called on to give of ourselves and our time to the church and to our community. In Stewardship of Treasure, we give back to God by giving of our

financial resources to our Church, to the diocese, and to charitable organizations in the community. We look to Jesus for help in understanding what stewardship is and what it means. Jesus points out that we reveal our values by our actions just as a tree reveals what kind of tree it is by the kind of fruit it bears. This is very similar to what Our Lord says in the Gospel of St. Luke about the things we value, "Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also."

Stewardship will make a difference. The difference is seen in several areas of our lives. First, the difference is in the focus of giving. Instead of focusing on the needs of the group to whom we're giving financial support or helping with time and talent, the focus is primarily on God and our relationship with Him.

Second, the difference is in the motivation for giving. Stewardship is an integral part of our spiritual life and we give because we are grateful to God for what He has given us. We give freely because we want to, not because we have to.

Third, the difference is in the result of the giving. As we practice stewardship, we find we grow spiritually and that our faith is deepened and nourished. In fact, we find that our lives are changed for the good.

Please take the next two weeks to read the letters and brochures we are sending you and to listen carefully to what your fellow parishioners have to say about their commitments from the pulpit. Then, I hope you will give prayerful consideration to your personal commitment of your time, talent, and treasure.