

**STEWARDSHIP: A CHRIST-CENTERED LIFE**

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Stewardship is living out a commitment to be Christ-centered rather than self-centered.<sup>1</sup> Our society encourages a self-centered attitude. Our Holy Father Pope Francis warns that "When the Church becomes closed up on itself it gets sick."<sup>2</sup> This behavior only leads to a self-referential reality and a sick person, Church and world. In my opinion he is warning us of this risk because he sees that the selfish mindset has already taken over in many societies, including the United States. This self-referential attitude is opposite to the Gospel values and the call of Christ for all Christians. Christ teaches, "But seek first the kingdom (of God) and his righteousness, and all these things will be given you besides."<sup>3</sup> Being good stewards is precisely this putting God first before all else then others before oneself.



We see examples of stewardship throughout the Sacred Scriptures beginning in Genesis. "Then the LORD asked Cain, Where is your brother Abel? He answered, "I do not know. Am I my brother's keeper?" God then said: What have you done? Your brother's blood cries out to me from the ground!"<sup>4</sup> From the beginning God makes us aware that everything we have and everyone we know is given to us and has its origin in God. Therefore we are accountable to God for how we treat both things and others. As well as how we use our gifts and talents that he has given us for the building of His Kingdom. In the Gospel of Luke, Jesus speaks of the faith and prudent servant being the one that the Master will put in charge precisely because he is faithful to his master, and prudent with what he has been given. Earlier, in the Gospel of Matthew, Jesus teaches the parable of the talents those who make us of what they have been given for the good of all have the correct understanding of the gift and its purpose for others. St. Peter echoes the teachings of Christ in his first letter, "As each one has received a gift, use it to serve one another as good stewards of God's varied grace."<sup>5</sup> The gift has been given for the good of the other and if it is kept to oneself it will make one sick and self-referential as the Holy Father noted. Gifts are intended to be given and received so much so that if a gift is not given it ceases to be a gift.

Furthermore the characteristics of a good steward include but are not limited to accountability, a gratitude for the gift that has been given, and a generous donation of the gift to others, which is ultimately rooted in one's desire to give back to God for His own sake. "Christian stewardship applies to everything: all personal talents, abilities, time, the Local, National and World Wide environment, all human and natural resources wherever they are, the economic order, Governmental affairs and even outer space.... Stewardship is another way of worshipping, praising and thanking God"<sup>6</sup> At the foundation of the each of the characteristics of a good steward is the realization that they are giving back to God what is His and that he is worthy no matter the prosperity of the giver or the need of the circumstance.

Lastly, how does one become a good steward with what he has been given? A genuine understanding of who the giver of all gifts is will encourage a humble disposition of giving back to the giver of all good gifts, the Father.<sup>7</sup> It calls for continual conversion of the person seeking first the Kingdom and gradually turning more and more toward God coming out of self. May the practices of this Lenten season draw us out of ourselves and to closer likeness to Christ; who was totally accountable to the Father for all he had been given.

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1 Fr. Anaeto, Class notes, Week 12: Lesson 12 Spirituality of Stewardship, PS 805, Holy Apostles.  
2 Lawler, Phil, The Ideal of Pope Francis: The Servant Church, May 23, 2013, catholicculture.org  
3 The Holy Bible, Matthew 6:33, NAB USCCB.org/theBible  
4 The Holy Bible, Genesis 4:10, USCCB.org/theBible  
5 The Holy Bible, 1 Peter. 4:10, USCCB.org/theBible  
6 Fr. Anaeto, Class notes, Week 12: Lesson 12 Spirituality of Stewardship, PS 805, Holy Apostles.  
7 Cf:James 1:17

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