



Seven Signs of a Stewardship Parish

By Bishop Robert Morneau

Prayers

The authentic steward must be rooted in the sanctifying presence of Christ through prayer and sacraments that give spiritual nourishment and a bond of unity. The steward needs to be sustained above all, with prayer and constant contact with the Christian community.

Hospitality

Parishes need to warmly welcome all members. Everyone has something to contribute. Everyone is needed. Communities known for their hospitality to all members, for the vitality of their faith, and for the depth of their service to people in need invariably inspire others to participate in ministry and to be generous in financial support.

Stewardship Committee

Parishes need a systematic way of infusing the theology and practice of stewardship into the life of the parish – identifying opportunities for member of the parish to share their time, talent, treasure, and prayer and to establish an ongoing process to recruit, recognize and thank volunteers in all parish ministries.

Recommitment

Stewardship is expressed not in a single program, but in a constant reminder and invitation to commit one's very self to the Lord. Annual recommitments help to transform individual lives and the life of the parish.

Outreach

The parish as a whole needs to set aside a portion of its resources to serve persons in need in the parish, the community, the diocese, and the universal parishioners by creating opportunities for human interaction.

Accountability

Constant accountability is fundamental to good stewardship. Parish stewardship efforts require a visible commitment to accountability for the full range of parish activities – from the way decisions are made and carried out by parish personnel to the way resources are collected, managed and used to change lives.

Goal Setting

Vibrant parishes have a shared vision and goals that support the vision. Goals should be set for all ministries. They should be challenging yet realistic and, when possible, measurable. It is important to note that goals should be communicated clearly to the parish. The parish also needs to report on the progress made toward reaching their goal.

Witnesses of the Baptized

A key ingredient is the personal witness of baptized individuals who have experienced a change of heart as a result of their commitment to stewardship. Personal witness is essential to building a solid foundation for parish stewardship.