

Isaiah 26:12

"For all that we have
accomplished, You
have done for us."

BLESSED TRINITY PARISH



Growing Our Faith One Day at a Time by Father Joe Rossi

The theme for our process of Stewardship Renewal for 2022 is: "Growing Our Faith One Day at a Time." It calls to mind a passage from the eleventh chapter of John's Gospel wherein Lazarus has just died. His sisters, Martha and Mary, are understandably upset. Upon hearing the news of Lazarus' death, Jesus, who was a close friend of Lazarus, takes his sweet time before arriving on the scene. This exasperates Martha to the point where she exclaims: "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died..." Jesus responds by saying: "I am the resurrection and the life; whoever believes in me... will never die. Do you believe this?" Martha's response is rather interesting: "Yes, Lord, I have come to believe that you are the Messiah..." This response suggests that Martha was definitely a believer, but it took her awhile to get there. Faith, for her, was this gradual, incremental journey that led her in slow, small steps to acknowledge that Jesus is Lord.

It is really no different for us. From the brokenness of her brother's death, Martha is able to experience the new life that Jesus promises her and all believers. Jesus is very gentle and patient with Martha. This same Jesus is just as patient with us.

Brokenness is a reality of life for all of us; it manifests itself in suffering, sickness, death, the loss of a job, emotional distress, divorce, rejection, misunderstandings, and in many other ways as well. From these experiences the Lord is constantly and patiently calling us to embrace life anew. When life is seemingly on a downward spiral and nothing seems to be heading in the right direction, the Lord is there to grasp us by the hand and lead us to greener pastures by taking small, gradual steps with us. Jesus will never let go of us! This is the theme of our Stewardship Renewal for 2022. Please God, never let us let go of Him!!!

It calls to mind a piece of Japanese lore. In Japan, broken objects are often repaired with gold. The flaw is seen as a unique piece of the object's history which adds to its beauty. Consider this when you feel broken. Sometimes our life of faith becomes shattered when we are shattered. A slow, "one-day-at-a-time" approach will lead us back to the God who never left us in the first place. May our on-going stewardship of Time, Talent, and Treasure reflect our sincere gratitude for this fact of our life together.

Renewal - Why do this EVERY Year???

Spiritual growth and renewal are a continuing part of the life of every Christian. They are also vital to the life of our Parish. An important aspect of this spiritual growth is embodied in the principle of stewardship.

Through stewardship, we thank God for all His blessings by returning to Him a portion of the time, talent, and

- Their original wedding wasn't quite what they had hoped for and now they want something meaningful to them.
- They simply wish to publicly reaffirm their tremendous love for one another that has matured and deepened with the passing of years.

Like the relationship between a married couple, our spiritual

community also change. If we each made the same routine commitment year after year, we might not be addressing those needs.

That is why, each and every year, we are asked to reflect on the many blessings in our lives, and to examine whether our corresponding gifts back to the Lord are in proportion to what we have been given. We are asked to formally renew our commitment to living as good and faithful stewards. Having a stewardship renewal each year also gives those newly embracing a stewardship way of life, the opportunity to make a pledge for the coming year.



treasure He has freely given to us. Each of us can do this on a personal level, on an ongoing basis. As a Community of Faith, we are asked to do this in a more formal way on an annual basis. Many people have asked why we do this year after year after year.

Consider a married couple. As an expression of their love, commitment and faithfulness to each other, many married people renew their vows at some point. Why do they do that?

- The couple may have been through a difficult time and want to mark this new chapter by reaffirming their commitment to one another.

growth and maturity don't stop evolving after a certain milestone anniversary (or when we reach adulthood). Our lives and our circumstances are ever-changing. Our relationships change over time, too, including our relationship with the Lord.

If we made a promise, pledge, or commitment to God a year ago, or five years ago, would we be making the same exact promise today? Not likely. Just like a married couple renewing their vows, we too have reasons to reexamine and strengthen our pledge of a stewardship way of living.

Just as each of us change, the needs of our Parish and

As a Community of Faith, each person's steps toward embracing stewardship as a way of life are merged together, making a tremendous impact for all of us in the Parish as we continue to build a Community of Faith and family. As more members of our Parish family take those personal steps and feel compelled to live generous lives in loving service to God and neighbor, our Parish will continue to grow and thrive.

Having an Annual Stewardship Renewal gives us the opportunity to spend time prayerfully reflecting on the spirituality of stewardship, our relationship with the Lord, and how we can respond, in gratitude, for all that we have been given.

Stewardship - What Gifts can I return to God?

How do I Decide about Stewardship?

With all this talk of stewardship renewal, how are we to know what our specific response should be? How much time should I give to God? What gifts/talents should I be sharing? How much money am I supposed to give, really? Every year we are asked to discern our level of stewardship and renew our commitment. Where to begin? Before we make that commitment, we need to step back and think about why bother at all.

The concept of stewardship invites us both into a loving relationship with the Lord as a disciple and into a response of gratitude by sharing the blessing we have been given with others. In her book, *Turning Hearts to Christ*, Lisa Anslinger describes Christian stewards as "disciples who come to recognize that all we are and have and will be is truly God's. We come to understand ourselves as being entrusted with the care and nurturing of these many blessings, to bring them to bear great fruit, and to give them back with increase." (p.46) What we give, what we share, is a free response to God's grace in our lives, given in gratitude for all that we been given ourselves. It is a response to that loving relationship with Jesus, not the fulfillment of an obligation. Stewardship assumes discipleship!

When you meet Jesus, and get to know Him...not just know about Him, but personally know Him, things are different. You can't help but be changed. This relationship allows us to trust and let go, to give freely and not worry about the cost.

As you consider your commitment, there are two areas to reflect upon:

1. Where am I in my relationship with Jesus?

The response can range from "I don't think I even have a relationship with Jesus" to "Jesus Christ is at the center of my life and I want to follow Him in all that I do" with multiple variations between these two points. The point here is to stop and take stock and see where you need to grow. It is a lifelong process. Take this to prayer. Share your

questions, doubts, desires with the Lord and ask for guidance on your journey.

Can I be a good steward even if I think I have work to do faith-wise? Of course! In fact, making the decision to give, and to trust that God will take care of things, even when you struggle to believe it is possible, can in fact help you to grow. You give yourself the opportunity to see God at work, through you!

2. What/how should I give?

Discernment is not simply making a decision, it is making a decision with God. Jesus took time to be quiet and pray before He preached, healed, or served others in any way. Follow His example and spend some quiet time with Him to guide you in your decision. How much time do I give to God in prayer or worship? Where have you been blessed? How can you share that with others? Sometimes that is financial, sometimes it is in time and sometimes it is sharing a specific talent or skill. Usually it is a combination, depending on your own circumstances.

As far as identifying talents and skills, think about what you are good at. Do other people affirm that? Does it bring you joy or energize you? What are the needs of the Parish that could utilize such skills? How can sharing that lift others, serve the community, help build up the Kingdom of God? If you need help with the process, you can reach out to any of the members of the Stewardship Council.

So, pause, pray, respond...you just may find that in your giving, you too receive and grow!

Giving:

providing love or other
emotional support; caring.

"Give back what God has given you!"

Matthew 25:14-30

Stewardship - A Way of Life

"I am sick of hearing that word STEWARDSHIP!"

"What is Stewardship all about?" "Stewardship is only about raising money." These are some of the comments we have received over the past 5 years as we have introduced the concept of embracing a Stewardship way of life. Stewardship is not a program and is not just about money, although your treasure is an element of Stewardship.

Living a Stewardship way of life requires daily recognition of and gratitude for the many gifts God has generously blessed us with, such as our time, talent and treasure, and realizing that we do not own any of them. We are only stewards of these gifts for God. We have a tendency to think that we have risen in our careers, accumulated our wealth, become prominent members of society through our intelligence, our hard work, our determination. We did it all ourselves.

But who gave us the gift of our minds, our work ethic, the love and support of our families, the blessing of living in a free and prosperous country? All of these are gifts from God and we live in gratitude to God for all that He has done for us.

We don't own anything, we are only stewards and are meant to use these gifts for God's purpose, not ours. As in the Parable of the Talents, (Mt 25:14-30, Lk 19:11-27) at the end of our earthly lives, we will be asked how we have used our gifts. How did we use our time, our talents and our treasure to further God's Kingdom here on earth? Did we use our gifts for what we wanted or what God wanted? Did we use our gifts in love of God and service to others?

There is a quote by Lisa Brenninkmeyer"There is enough time in the day to accomplish everything God wants me to do. If I am harried, it is because I am doing things that God has not asked of me." We can apply that statement not only to our time but also to our talents and our treasure. Stewardship helps us to discern our gifts and how God wants us to use them. Stewardship leads to a joyful life, not just a happy one.

How can we make stewardship more meaningful to you? We really want to know! You can answer that question on your commitment card, or answer the one-question survey at

<https://www.blessedtrinitycatholic.org/annual-stewardship-renewal>

STEWARDSHIP PRAYER

Heavenly Father,

You call us to be a believing, hoping, loving, and serving faith community.

Make us stewards of
Your gift of life;
help us to be life-giving
for one another and for all
those we serve.

Make us stewards of
Your gift of peace;
help us model compassion
for all to see.

Make us stewards of
Your gift of love;
help our hearts burn
with love for others.

Make us stewards of
Your gift of faith;
help us to be true and vibrant
witnesses of Your Good News;
and help us to grow in our faith,
one day at a time.

We ask this in the name of Jesus,
Your Son, who lives and reigns with You
and the Holy Spirit one God, forever and ever.

Amen

We give because
GOD GAVE FIRST

"For God so loved the world he gave his only Son."

- John 3:16

Blessed Trinity Parish

2022 Stewardship Commitment Card

2021 has most certainly been a trying and unusual year, as we navigated through uncharted waters. In the face of great uncertainty and difficulty, it is easy to become complacent. Yet, this is not what God calls us to do. We are called to live stewardship as a way of life – in the good, bad, or uncertain times. Our Stewardship Renewal reminds us that God's gifts never stop pouring out. In turn, we never should have reason to stop thanking Him. So, let us take this time of Stewardship Renewal as an opportunity to strengthen our relationship with God in the midst of our rapidly changing world.

If you read the article on page 2 (*Annual Stewardship Renewal: Why do we do this EVERY year???*), it will explain why we make an annual commitment. Our commitment is a personal one between ourselves and God. We ask that you prayerfully reflect on the areas of PRAYER (*Time*), SERVICE (*Talent*) and SHARING (*Treasure*) and make your own commitment for 2022.

Then, as a visible sign of that commitment, we are asking all parishioners to bring their completed commitment card (below) to Mass on the weekend of October 23rd-24th, 2021. At offertory time, you will be asked to come forward and place your completed card in a basket near the altar.

Please use a separate card for each family member. Additional cards, as well as the 2022 Ministry Guide, are available at both church entrances and on the Blessed Trinity Parish website. Go to www.BlessedTrinityCatholic.org and select the "Stewardship" tab and select "Annual Stewardship Renewal" for those documents and for more information about the Annual Stewardship Renewal.

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Blessed Trinity Parish

2022 Stewardship Commitment Card

Please Print:

First Name

Last Name

If under 18, parent's name(s)

Phone

Email

Address

City

State

Zip

My 2022 Stewardship Commitment

My Commitment for PRAYER (*Time*) for 2022 will be:

My Commitment to SERVICE (*Talent*) for 2022 will be:

I have expressed an interest in the following ministries:

My Commitment to SHARING my financial resources this year (*Treasure*):

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- ☐ I have made a personal commitment to PRAYER (*Time*) for 2022.
- ☐ I have made a personal commitment to SHARING (*Treasure*) for 2022.
- ☐ I have made a personal commitment to SERVICE (*Talent*) for 2022 by continuing with the following ministries:

- ☐ I would like more information about the following ministries:

How can we make STEWARDSHIP more meaningful to you?

Recipe



FROM THE KITCHEN OF:

NAME:

GOD

SERVINGS:

Unlimited

PREP. TIME:

None

TOTAL TIME:

A Lifetime

INGREDIENTS:

1. Start with diligence.

6. Mix in godliness.

2. Next add virtue.

7. Sprinkle with kindness.

3. Stir in knowledge.

8. Combine all together and serve

4. Pour in self-control.

with brotherly love.

5. Temper with perseverance.

Glossary Terms – What are we talking about???

Some definitions of commonly used words in this newsletter:

MISSION:

A specific task with which a person or a group is charged. Our Christian mission, the mission of the Church and each disciple, is to evangelize: "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you." (Matthew 28:19-20)

EVANGELIZATION:

The spreading of the Gospel or Good News, the saving story of Jesus' life, death and resurrection, which includes invitation to respond, and the initial conversion of the one who is the subject of our evangelization.

DISCIPLE:

Someone who has encountered Jesus, follows Him, leads others to Him. They have made the conscious choice, in faith, to put Jesus at the center of their life. They do this again and again, thus making conversion a lifestyle, not merely a moment.

STEWARDSHIP:

The job of supervising or taking care of something. Christian Stewardship refers to the responsibility that Christians have in maintaining and using wisely the gifts that God has bestowed. We collaborate with God, using our gifts to continue the saving work of Jesus—the Church's essential mission.

RENEWAL:

To make like new: restore to freshness, vigor.

Stewardship Resources

- ❖ Our Stewardship page <https://blessedtrinitycatholic.org/stewardship>
- ❖ The Called and Gifted discernment process from the Catherine of Siena Institute (<https://siena.org/called-gifted>)
- ❖ The book, Catholic Stewardship: Sharing God's Gifts, by Colleen Smith



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Littleton, MA 01460

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Westford, MA 01886

CURRENT MASS SCHEDULE:

Weekend Schedule:

Saturday 4:00 pm – St. Catherine Church (live streamed)

Sunday 8:30 am – St. Anne Church

Sunday 10:30 am – St. Catherine Church

Weekday Schedule:

Mon & Tues 8:00 am – St. Anne Church

Thu & Fri 8:00 am – St. Catherine Church

Reconciliation:

Saturday 3:00 pm or by appointment

St. Catherine Church

Fr. Peter Quinn 978-320-4201

Father Joe Rossi 978-320-4202

2022 Annual Stewardship Renewal

Come experience our **2022 Annual Stewardship Renewal** -
Growing Our Faith...One Day at a Time

DON'T MISS THESE EVENTS!

October 9 & 10, 2021

Ministry Information Weekend

Find out how to get involved! Information on the many service opportunities will be distributed after all Masses.

October 16 & 17, 2021

Witness Talks

Listen to real life faith journeys of parishioners at Blessed Trinity. Share in their struggles and joys.

October 23 & 24, 2021

Commitment Weekend

Participate in Stewardship Renewal blessings and prayers. Submit your Commitment Cards at Mass.

