

# STEWARDSHIP

BLESSED TRINITY PARISH

## A Generous Heart

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# Stewardship: *Sharing our Time, Talent, and Treasure with Generous Hearts* by Father Peter

***“Everything on earth has its own time and its own season.” Ecclesiastes 3:1***

Like many churches throughout the country, our Annual Stewardship Renewal takes place during the month of October. For churches like Blessed Trinity Parish, this renewal has a season of its own. That season is typically about four weeks long and happens sometime in the fall usually before Thanksgiving. Even when our “stewardship renewal season” ends, it’s not over. In fact, it’s never “over” when it comes to renewing our commitment to stewardship of all blessed and entrusted in us!

Stewardship should be a part of everything we do throughout all the seasons. It is a spiritual discipline and a way of living that helps us to manage what God has entrusted to us and to teach others the true joy of giving as a response to God’s generosity. We are called to be good stewards of all that we have: stewards of time, stewards of the gift of our talents, stewards of resources, stewards of relationships, stewards of the people in our Community of Faith—in other words, everything!

What might it look like if we experienced “seasons of stewardship” instead of one “stewardship season”? Look at agriculture, we reap the harvest in one season of the seeds that were planted and nurtured in previous seasons. Our liturgical church year is also a succession of seasons that begin with the birth of the Christ child at Christmas, lead us through Christ’s ministry to his death and resurrection,

and culminates with Christ the King Sunday. Likewise, “seasons of stewardship” have a beginning (the annual stewardship renewal), but the succession of seasons spans the entire year, and in turn our entire lives.

**What might our personal “Seasons of Stewardship” look like?**

**Winter:** A season of reflection. The winter months are a good time for



taking stock and to earnestly discern how God may be calling you. What have we been blessed with? Are we using our God given gifts? Are we living a God-centered rather than self-centered life? Not unlike a New Year’s resolution, do we need to turn over a new leaf when it comes to fully living a life a stewardship?

**Spring:** A season of awareness. Spring is a time of awareness as the beauty of God’s creation begins to come out of hibernation and shows signs of growth and rebirth. This is a time to generate an awareness of all that God has entrusted into our care. We are reminded at Easter of the sacrifice of Jesus Christ for us. How do we show our gratitude for the new life we have been given in Christ, for his mercy and love? Are we mindful of what that means in our daily lives?

**Summer:** A season of family time and faith. It’s so easy for us to use the summer months for rest and relaxation—not only in our personal life, but also in our spiritual life. While traveling, taking vacations and spending quality time with our family can interrupt our routine of worship and connection to the parish, summertime can be an opportunity to refocus on what it means to be a part of the Blessed Trinity Parish family. God has granted each of us the privilege of being part of a wonderful, caring, and vibrant faith community. What part do each of us play as part of this family? This is a good time to reflect on what priority God and His church play in our lives. Are those priorities sometimes “seasonal?”

**Fall:** A season of new beginnings, of renewal and commitment. So here we are back to fall and the time when we typically focus on stewardship. If we have been in tune to stewardship the seasons prior, then during this renewal season we are better prepared to reflect on the past year and the year to come. Are we truly embracing stewardship as a path to discipleship? Are we ready to grow in our commitment?

**Stewardship and our commitment to it never go out of season. You can renew your promises and commitments at any time during the year. Certainly, God’s gifts never stop being poured out, so in turn, we should never have reason to stop thanking Him and responding with our lives.**

To find out more about stewardship or one of the many ministries at Blessed Trinity Parish, please contact the office at **978-320-4220** or email [stewardship@blessedtrinitycatholic.org](mailto:stewardship@blessedtrinitycatholic.org). We look forward to hearing from you and helping you discern what God has in store for you!



*F. Peter*

# gratitude

REMEMBER THE WORDS THE LORD HIMSELF SAID,  
"IT IS MORE BLESSED TO GIVE THAN TO RECEIVE."

ACTS 20:35

## Being Thankful: *Gratitude* by Stacy Brown

With Thanksgiving approaching, it's a great time to talk about gratitude. It may seem a bit cliché, but it's a really powerful gift: it improves attitude and happiness, reduces anxiety and worry, and allows one to focus on being present. The following article by Father Ronald Rolheiser, which I came across years ago, has continued to be an endless source of Spiritual Wisdom. Please God, may you find some "gold nuggets" yourself regarding the Gift of Gratitude.

### SAYING THANKS...

The famed novelist Morris West wrote, "When we grow as persons, there should only be three phrases left in your vocabulary: **Thank you! Thank you! Thank you!**" At a certain point in our lives nothing else matters other than gratitude. We can be healthy, accomplished, famous, rich, and have left behind a legacy that will make us

forever remembered, but if we are not living inside a spirit of gratitude, all of that will mean nothing. We will not be happy, nor will we be much of a source of happiness for others.

Gratitude is the ultimate virtue and the only real route to happiness. It is more important even than love because anything which does not take its root in gratitude will be self-serving and manipulative in some way. Only when we give of ourselves to others because we are grateful for how we have been blessed—only then will our love flow out as pure and as not demanding something in return. When we are not acting out of gratitude, we may be well-intentioned and outwardly generous in our actions, but we will not truly be acting in love. We will be carrying other people's crosses but, in however subtle the fashion, also sending them the bill.

The entire spiritual task of growing into a truly mature and loving person consists in rooting ourselves more and more in gratitude, where love can flow out from a heart and demand nothing in return because it already has its return.

To celebrate thanksgiving—to explicitly express and celebrate gratitude—is the singularly most important and healthiest thing we can do for ourselves, both spiritually and humanly.







“Children are the world’s most valuable resource and its best hope for the future.”  
~ John F. Kennedy

# Gracious Children: *Hope for Our Future*

by Angela Gagliano Burke (from The British School of Monaco and Play for Peace)

We believe that children are priceless treasures and gifts from God. As Christians, we consider that human life is sacred, and that every child is a unique being, worthy of respect and dignity. Children are meant to be loved and cherished and to grow up in a healthy, happy environment. Every child deserves a bright future—one of hope and opportunity.

The world our children are growing in is highly complex and so much is designed to distract us. It is confusing, oftentimes difficult to navigate, and full of stressors. Depression and anxiety affect millions, addiction in its many forms is widespread, and general unhappiness, numbness, and dissatisfaction are commonplace.

Dan Sullivan, author and conceptual thinker, draws upon a concept called “Gap and Gain.” He sees that many people live in “the Gap.” For example, you might buy your child a chocolate bar on the way home from school and when you give it to him he might say, “You didn’t get the one I like.” That’s

“the Gap.” Even though the gift wasn’t quite right, it was still a gift, and he failed to appreciate the act and see “the Gain” in it. There was no gratitude.

The Roman statesman and philosopher, Marcus Tullius Cicero wrote, “Gratitude is not only the greatest of the virtues, but the parent of all the others.” It’s worth considering this statement for a moment: can any other virtue truly exist without gratitude? Can hope, for example, truly hope without gratitude? Is humility sincere without gratitude? Without gratitude all other virtues are lessened or nullified. We may extol the virtues of hope and courage, but is hope real without the appreciation for what that hope can bring? Is courage real without appreciation for what courage really is, and what that courage demands? And what is appreciation without gratitude?

I have heard parents say on many occasions that they want their child to be happy, and I could not agree with that statement more, but happiness cannot be had without gratitude. We

need to enable our children to view life not as a “gap” but as a “gain.” Core values of integrity, responsibility, respect, kindness, courage and curiosity should be embedded in all we do. A family must breed positivity, where everyone is heard, valued, and appreciated—that appreciation is key—and viewing each day’s opportunities as “gain.”

By nurturing and empowering children, we lay the foundation for a brighter, more compassionate, and more sustainable future. Their energy, resilience, and eagerness to learn bring hope and possibility, reminding us of our own potential. It is our responsibility to provide them with a nurturing environment, opportunities to thrive, and the tools to unlock their full potential. By doing so, we secure a promising future for all.

To explore programs for youth at Blessed Trinity Parish, please reach out to the office at 978-320-4220 or visit [www.blessedtrinitycatholic.org/Youth](http://www.blessedtrinitycatholic.org/Youth) for ongoing opportunities.



# Reflection: *What's your calling?* by Rich Chenell

***"God has called you through the Gospel to possess the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ." (2 Thessalonians 2:14)***

What's your "calling"? It can sound like such an intimidating question because it conjures up the idea of a predetermined path or destiny: something that we were born to do or something that we were meant to be that we often associate with careers such as teachers, doctors, firefighters, the military—the seemingly larger-than-life vocations. And, many times, it was indeed a "calling" for those that entered those fields.

Yet, for some people, their occupation doesn't feel like a "calling" and might have happened by chance, or because of an obligation to a family business, or out of financial necessity. Some ended up in their field as a result of an unexpected opportunity or break, while for others, it was an intentional path that gradually evolved. Let's face it... however we arrived in our occupations, we all have to support ourselves and our families. That's in our secular lives.

But, everyone has a spiritual calling. As ***Romans 8:28*** says, ***"And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose."***

So, rather than using "calling," I'll ask, ***"WHAT'S YOUR PURPOSE?"***

God expects us to actively participate in our faith lives and to spread the Gospel. We weren't pushed out the door by God with Him saying, "OK...there you go. Start preaching." We've all been given unique and individual gifts by the Holy Spirit that we are supposed to use to help ourselves, and to help others, to become what we were created to be... ***Disciples of Christ.***

Don't let that last line scare you into thinking that God expects us to walk around the desert in sandals eating bugs while proclaiming His word. But, ***we are called to be disciples and to share our time, talents, and all of our God given gifts, while helping others along their spiritual journeys.*** Being a disciple comes in many and varied ways within our faith community. Sometimes it's as individuals, sometimes it's collectively.

So, what is your purpose? What have you been called by God to do in your faith life? You don't know yet? Don't worry about it because you are not alone, no matter how young or old you

are. Some hear that calling early in life and some much later in life. Though for some people it can be, most times hearing God's calling is not an earth shattering or headline making occurrence. It's not something that should feel forced or comes as a surprise, but comes after much discernment and praying on it. As it did to Elijah when God's voice wasn't in the earthquake, mighty wind or fire, God's calling often times comes softly, quietly in ***"a still, small voice."*** ***1 Kings 12***

So, as we enter Stewardship Renewal season, I'll ask again...what is your purpose? What is your calling? How can God use you to be His hands and feet, to spread the Gospel? Spend some time praying on it. If you don't hear Him right away, continue to pray on it. When He does answer, you'll find it's not a heavy and burdensome calling because as Jesus said, ***"For my yoke is easy and my burden is light."*** (***Matthew 11:30***). What is important is that you respond with a joyful and generous heart for, ***"Whoever sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. Each must do as already determined, without sadness or compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver."*** (***Corinthians 9:6a - 7***).

“ *God expects us to actively participate in our faith lives and to spread the GOSPEL.* ”

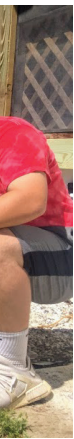




*one faith, one community, one parish*







*blessed Trinity*



# Social Justice Ministry: *Answering the Call to Serve*

by Diahne Goodwin

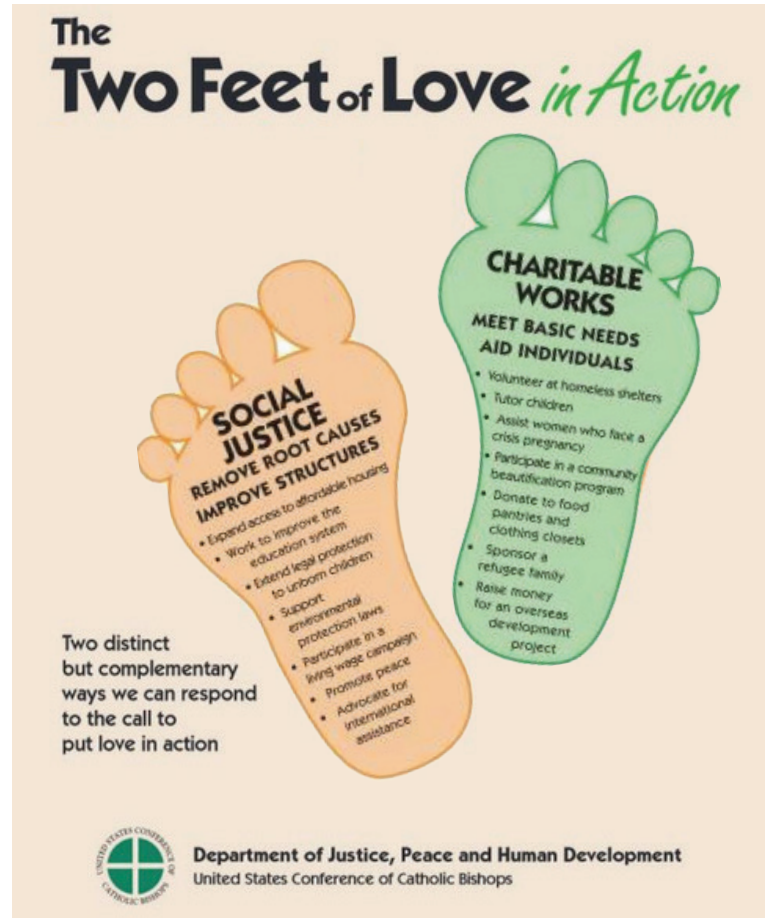
The Social Justice Ministry, co-led by Dani Koutsoufis and Rachel Muller, is a new ministry at Blessed Trinity Parish. Dani took some time to share her personal journey and call to this ministry and invite others to join.

Dani's path to the ministry was unforeseen. *"I'd been involved in hospitality and usher roles at my previous parish. This was uncharted territory for me,"* she recounts. Rachel's invitation to help start this ministry sparked Dani's curiosity, despite initial uncertainty. The Catholic Church's social justice focus always attracted her, although her understanding was limited. Rachel shared a pamphlet by the USCCB, "The Two Feet of Love in Action," that really opened her eyes and inspired her. Immersing herself in church literature, including writings by Pope Francis, Dani discovered the depth of social justice work, which focuses on both direct service and social action. They recognized the parish's strength in service but identified room for growth in social action.

Dani's explorations opened up a real calling, desiring to put her faith into action—a sentiment echoed in their mission statement:

**"Nurtured by our rich liturgical life, the social justice ministry seeks to put our faith into action by supporting a culture of listening, compassion and servitude. In concrete and tangible ways, we are all called to respond within and beyond our parish community to Christ's call to love our neighbor through outreach, education, works of mercy and social action."**

At its heart, it's about the call to love one's neighbor, addressing the seven pillars of Catholic Social



Justice: Life and Dignity of the Human Person; Call to Family Community, and Participation; Rights and Responsibilities; Preferential Option for the Poor; The Dignity of Work and the Rights of Workers; Solidarity; and Care for God's Creation.

The group had an introductory meeting in the spring and have begun to make plans, beginning with sharing insights with the parish around the topics of social justice. They are excited to collaborate with other parish groups like "Wonderfully Made," St. Vincent de Paul, and Faith Formation, to maximize their impact.

Reflecting on her journey, Dani shares how her involvement deepened her faith. *"I've found a community of dedicated, kindred spirits to share my faith and enthusiasm for accomplishments,"* she reflects. *"I am humbled by the leadership team; by their participation and willingness to work and how far we have come already."*

**Curious? "If you have even a slight interest in any of the seven pillars of Catholic social teaching,"** she says, **"our ministry is for you. You don't have to do everything, but each of us can do something." Perhaps this could be your calling too!**



# A Generous Heart: *God's Model for our Lives*

by Diahne Goodwin

***“Tell them to do good, to be rich in good works, and to be generous and ready to share.” 1 Timothy 6:18***

It can seem that everywhere we turn we are being asked to be generous, to give, give, give...It can be overwhelming. But, realistically, how do we respond to that? How can one even begin to respond while at the same time be responsible for personal obligations in our families and daily life? Where to begin?

While often associated with money, generosity is way more than that. It involves focusing less on ourselves and looking out for the needs of others and sharing resources, even to the point of sacrifice. Even if we do not have much, we can still have a heart of generosity through giving. Generosity as a way of being, as an attitude of the heart rather than an obligation to feel guilty or pressured about.

**Generosity is all about the heart.** The Bible teaches us that giving to others is inextricably tied to loving others. Without loving our neighbors—including our family, friends, colleagues and vulnerable members in our community—even the grandest acts of generosity are meaningless. Conversely, even the smallest acts of generosity are considered momentous when done with a heart of love.



**Generosity is about Gratitude.** A generous heart is most possible within the context of a grateful heart. If we are unsatisfied with our own lives, we are not likely to be generous toward others. However, if we are thankful for what we have and celebrate the blessings in our lives, our attitude shifts away from us, fueling generosity.

God himself gave us our greatest blessing—his only son—who died on a cross for us. When we focus on gratitude, we remember what we have already been given, and love can flow freely without wanting anything in return. With this life-changing generosity of God, we have an example to follow; to overflow with generosity, even when it's at personal cost.

***“Freely you have received; freely give.” Matthew 10:8***

**Generosity teaches us to trust God.** Giving generously is an opportunity for us to trust in God's provision rather than our own belongings or riches. Living in North America many of us are privileged to enjoy high living standards, good health care and education. Ironically, the more we have, the more we fear losing it. Scripture reminds us that life on Earth is uncertain and nothing is guaranteed, but when we put our hope in God's provision, we can rest assured that he'll provide for our needs.

***“Command those who are rich in this present world not to be arrogant nor to put their hope in wealth, which is so uncertain, but to put their hope in God, who richly provides us with everything.” 1 Timothy 6:19, NIV***

**Generosity takes practice.** We might not automatically be generous people but with prayer, practice and help from God we can develop a generous heart. We must seek out the everyday ways we can care for others. Beyond monetary gifts, generosity can be expressed with words of kindness and encouragement, sharing of time with acts of comfort or a listening ear, praying for others, sharing our faith with others, and doing physical acts of service. There are as many ways to help people in need as there are people!

Yes, it can be overwhelming to think about all the need there is in the world. As a community, if we all approach the world with a generous heart, we can do much to reflect God's selfless love to others. Let's count our blessings with grateful hearts, pray for guidance, and look for those opportunities to respond with generosity, whatever that may look like.



# Elements of Stewardship

## STEWARDSHIP OF TIME (PRAYER) ...

**God calls us to be generous with all of our gifts, including our time.**

While many of us understand that prayer is an important element of the Christian life, most of us admit that it's difficult to find a quiet moment to spend with God. As Christians, we must remember that we cannot give what we do not have. In order for us to welcome others into the life of the Church, we need to make sure that our spiritual lives are properly in order. To become a more prayerful person, take inventory of how you spend the 168 hours in the week:

- Are you taking time to talk to God in prayer, to speak with Him as you would a friend?
- Are you seeking His truth through reading the Scriptures?
- Will you make Him first on your priority list so that you are able to give to others from the graces He has given you?



## STEWARDSHIP OF TALENT (SERVICE) ...

**God calls us to be generous with all of our gifts, including our talent.**

***“As each one has received a gift, use it to serve one another as good stewards of God’s varied Grace” (1 Peter 4:10).*** Each of us has received gifts from God that we are to use in humble service. While many of us may not recognize the skills or abilities we have as gifts, they are a means by which we can give glory to God through serving each other. At the Blessed Trinity Parish, our ministries provide opportunities for us to serve God and others. From a warm smile to giving someone a warm meal, we are able to welcome others into the family of God by being Christ to them. Reaching out in love, while sometimes difficult, can be quite spiritually enriching!

- Will you take the time to ask God how you can best serve Him through the service of His children?
- Pray about how your gifts can best be used to help others feel welcome.
- Sign up for a parish ministry that stretches you to put others’ needs before your own.
- Greet people before or after Mass, introducing yourself to unfamiliar faces.

## STEWARDSHIP OF TREASURE (SHARING) ...

**God calls us to be generous with all of our gifts, including our treasure.**

***“How shall I make a return to the Lord for all the good He has done for me?” (Psalm 116:12)***

In gratitude, we are called to give to God from our first fruits. That means creating a plan for giving to His Church. Having a plan, we can better do our part to share the gifts that God has given us. ‘Giving’ itself is a gift from God. It helps us keep God first in everything and place money second. Pray for God’s guidance and keep an open heart. The suggested goal is to give a total of 10% of your annual gross income (5% to the local parish and 5% to other Church needs and other charities that serve the greater community). Some families may have difficulty reaching this goal. Try increasing your gifts incrementally until you reach an amount that you know is right for you. Some best practices for giving are to:

- Create and maintain a household budget;
- Plan your giving annually;
- Give based on a proportion of your income;
- Use Online Giving





# Blessed Trinity Parish - 2024 Stewardship Commitment Card

**Please bring this completed commitment card to  
Mass on the weekend of October 28<sup>th</sup>-29<sup>th</sup> or mail to:**

**Blessed Trinity Parish  
Attn: Stewardship  
2 West St.  
Westford MA 01886**

**Please Print:**

\_\_\_\_\_  
First Name Last Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
If under 18, parent's name(s)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Phone Email

\_\_\_\_\_  
Address

\_\_\_\_\_  
City State Zip

I have made a commitment of TIME for 2024 of \_\_\_\_\_ hours a week in prayer.

I have made a commitment of sharing my TALENT for 2024 by continuing with the following ministries:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

I would like more information about or would like to volunteer for the following ministries:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

I have made a commitment of sharing my TREASURE for 2024 of \_\_\_\_\_ % of my income.

**How do YOU respond with a generous heart? We would love to hear your story!**

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

*Please use a separate card for each family member. Additional cards, as well as the 2024 Ministry Guide, are available at both church entrances and on our website. Go to [www.blessedtrinitycatholic.org/renewal](http://www.blessedtrinitycatholic.org/renewal) for those documents and for more information about the Annual Stewardship Renewal.*





**Blessed Trinity Parish**  
2 West Street • Westford, MA 01886  
(978) 320-4220  
office@blessedtrinitycatholic.org  
www.blessedtrinitycatholic.org

**Saint Anne Church**  
75 King St.  
Littleton, MA 01460

**Saint Catherine Church**  
107 N. Main St.  
Westford, MA 01886

## MASS TIMES:

### *Weekend Schedule:*

*Saturday 4:00 pm – St. Catherine Church*

*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 – St. Catherine Church  
or by appointment*

*Fr. Peter Quinn 978-320-4201*

*Father Joe Rossi 978-320-4202*

## YOU ARE WELCOME

No matter what your present status is in the Catholic Church,  
No matter your current family or marital situation,  
No matter your personal history, age, income, background, race,  
gender identity, sexual orientation, ethnicity, or spirituality,  
No matter your own self-image of holiness or virtue

You belong to Jesus Christ and you belong to us!

You are invited, accepted, and respected here at Blessed Trinity Parish. We want to share our Roman Catholic way of faith and life in Christ with you!