



## “STEWARDSHIP MINISTRY” What does it mean?

By Jesse Skramstad

The Stewardship Ministry is looking for new members. Most people are willing to help, if they know what they might be asked to do, what they might be able to contribute to the ministry as a group, and understand the goals of the ministry. As one of the members who was there at “the beginning” of Stewardship at our parish, I’ve been asked to explain just that.

In 2003, the Finance Ministry (then called Finance Council) was looking for new ways to resolve the problem of ever decreasing financial giving which was leading to deficit budgets in our parish. During one of their meetings, a council member suggested that they take a look at this NEW thing called “Stewardship”. The member had lived in another parish where stewardship was working and the parish never had a deficit. An International Catholic Stewardship Conference was scheduled in Chicago the following month and Pat Derrington and I were elected to attend to find out what Stewardship was all about. Although I said I would go, deep down I expected to be bored to tears listening to talks about how to fund raise and other financial ideas. Well, I was in for a big surprise.

The theme of the conference was “Stewardship: A Disciple’s Response”, and I wondered what that meant. During the course of one week, I learned that stewardship is really a NEW way of living, requiring a change of attitude or heart. It is similar to the response each of the disciples had to Jesus’ message. It is our own unique way of following after Jesus and living our lives according to His “New” way.

Driving home from the conference, I was convinced that what our parish was lacking was not financial giving, but “Stewardship”. What I learned was that “Stewardship” is not a quick fix or a way to increase parishioner giving. To quote Daniel Conway, ***“Stewardship is a lifestyle that reflects who we are and what we believe...A commitment to stewardship should influence our most basic choices: how we spend our free time, how we develop and use the skills and abilities God has given us, and how we earn, save, spend and share our money....stewardship as a way of life should have an impact on everything we choose to do. No exceptions!”***

That was nearly four years ago and we are still learning what stewardship means. We have learned that a stewardship parish is built upon four pillars: HOSPITALITY, PRAYER, FORMATION, and SERVICE. The goal of the Stewardship Ministry is to develop and foster a deeper understanding of what being a good steward really means and strive to develop ways for each of us to follow Jesus in our own unique way.

We are asking you to prayerfully consider joining our ministry. As a member of the Stewardship Ministry you will be asked to pray, help with the organization of Stewardship Commitment weekend, brainstorming and continuing to develop what Stewardship means for our parish and how to move that into action. If you are interested, please contact me, Wanda Viellieux, Pat Derrington, Jesse Skramstad or Jo Germain or come to our next meeting.

This Stewardship Prayer is a good reminder that we are all called to be good stewards of the gifts God has given to us. There is no “They” in stewardship, there is only I, Me and We. Living a stewardship way of life can renew each of us and ultimately our parish, our community and the world around us.

### **Stewardship Prayer**

My church is composed of people like me.

I help make it what it is.

It will be friendly if I am.

Its pews will be filled, if I help fill them.

It will make generous gifts to many causes, if I am a generous giver. It will bring other people into its worship and fellowship, if I invite and bring them.

It will be a church of loyalty and love, of fearlessness and faith, and a church with a noble spirit, if I, who make it what it is, am filled with these same things.

Therefore, with the help of God, I shall dedicate myself to the task of being all the things that I want my church to be.

AMEN