

GIFT OF SELF

The true meaning of stewardship and why it matters

People often think stewardship is a buzzword or fad. Or a shameless plug for money. Or a “program.” But it’s none of those — it’s a way of collaborating with God! Diana Liska, director of stewardship for the Diocese of Fort Worth, recently joined the *NTC* for a conversation on why stewardship is a key part of our Catholic faith and a way of life for us disciples.

What is stewardship as defined by our Church and our faith?

“Stewardship, in the easiest definition, is gift of self. It’s giving back to God what He gave us, which is everything.

“It’s a lifestyle based on gratitude for all that God has given us and then generously sharing those gifts with the understanding that we are stewards of these. We’re not meant to hoard them and keep them but to share them with others and be a conduit of God’s graces.

“So stewardship really at the heart is just a life of gratitude. Not taking anything for granted, not having this mentality of ‘poor me.’ But really understanding, ‘Why God, have You given me all of this? What can I do in little ways to repay you or to thank you for this?’ And so it’s a mind shift, which ultimately creates a culture shift in the parish when you view the world in a different way.”

How do you help foster stewardship in our diocese?

“I help parishes start stewardship

committees and help create a culture of stewardship as a way of life. The committee is a group that intentionally looks at the parish through the lens of stewardship and at ways we can better help parishioners live out their discipleship.”

Liska says there are currently 11 parishes with active stewardship committees with another on the way.

What does stewardship at the parish level look like?

Liska says it’s more than just doing a commitment card weekend or an annual ministry fair or starting a stewardship committee. “It’s more than that. It’s how are we welcoming someone from the second they walk in? What are we doing with new members? How are we reaching out to the poor? How are we inviting back those who have fallen away from the Church?”

“[Stewardship] is an ongoing journey. It’s an ongoing daily decision. Intentional focus at a parish has to happen. And so, sometimes we can easily get caught up on the criteria of stewardship. The, ‘Let’s do time, talent, treasure weekend. Now let’s do this ministry fair.’ But we have to ask: why are we doing it? I think we have to keep always going back to that ‘why’ in stewardship. Because there’s also a lot of people that serve in parishes, but why are they serving? It really comes down to are we using our gifts and are we serving others to glorify God?”

What are some of the things parishes with stewardship committees have been doing?

“Some of the biggest [contributions] are perpetual Adoration. What St. Peter the Apostle Parish and Sacred Heart Parish in Wichita Falls have done came from stewardship.

“And stewardship, without it being rooted in your relationship with God, is just working and being busy to be busy. So having that prayer opportunity and having parishioners yearning for that says a lot about a community because they’re a prayerful community who have a relationship with God and they want Him.”

What is the difference between discipleship and stewardship?

“Stewardship is the way we live out our discipleship, it is how we collaborate with God. God has given each of us unique talents, experiences, and skills, and it is our duty to use them to build up the Kingdom of God here on earth.

“But I think sometimes we get confused when we hear evangelization, discipleship, stewardship, and how they work together.

“Discipleship is saying ‘yes’ to God. Like, ‘Okay God, I’m gonna follow You and Your commandments and do what You want me to do.’ Then He says, ‘Okay, great, awesome, now get to work.’ And that’s stewardship. That’s the time and the talent piece... we’re giving back, we’re

“Be aware of your gifts. Pray every morning, ‘God, You have put me here, You have given me specific gifts that only I have... help me use them today.’”

saying thanks, we’re trusting God that He’s gonna take care of us as disciples, and so therefore we’re able to be generous.

“Then because of our love for Him, we naturally evangelize. We naturally have joy, and teach others, and share our faith with others. So, evangelization really is a fruit of stewardship.”

What role does hospitality play in our faith life and in stewardship?

“So hospitality is the first pillar of stewardship. Those pillars progress from hospitality, prayer, formation, and service.

“But without hospitality, the other three are never going to come. Prayer is the most important, but if we’re not hospitable and welcoming people in, they’re never going to come back. We’re never going to be able to form them, and they’re probably not going to serve. So hospitality is such a good starting point because it makes people want to come back to learn more about Christ and build a relationship with Him through prayer.

“I joke around in my parishes that people always say, ‘Oh, we don’t have the budget for that.’”

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NTC/Juan Guajardo



— Diana Liska
Director of Stewardship

BE GRATEFUL ▶

Doing a “gratitude Rosary” can help us become better stewards, Liska says.

Learn more about stewardship at [Advancement Foundation.org/stewardship](http://AdvancementFoundation.org/stewardship)

