



St. Cecilia Roman Catholic Church

St. Cecilia's Church
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Second Stewardship Message - September 10, 2006

I am pleased to announce that this weekend marks the beginning of the St. Cecilia Parish "Stewardship of Treasure Program." Over the next 3 weeks, we will be hearing much more about the "Stewardship of Treasure Program," from the pulpit, in the bulletin, and in the mail. Fr. McKenna asked me to take a few minutes today to talk about the Program.

If you are like me, I am sure that voice inside your head is asking: "Okay. What is the 'Stewardship of Treasure Program' and how does it affect me?" Either that or: "Uh-oh, is he going to ask for money?" Well, I do have some good news – I am NOT asking for money ... today. What I hope to do today is to explain what the "Stewardship of Treasure Program" is all about and how it affects each of us.

A good description of Stewardship is found in the 1993 pastoral from the National Conference of Catholic Bishops entitled "Stewardship: A Disciple's Response." In that pastoral, the bishops summed up Stewardship as a call to each of us to:

- Receive God's gifts gratefully;
 - Cultivate them responsibly;
 - Share them lovingly with others;
- and
- Return them with increase to God.

Stewardship, therefore, is simply a call for us - as Catholics - to recognize:

First, everything that we have and all we are is a gift from God, and

Second, since everything we have is a gift from God, we have a responsibility and duty to give a portion of what we have back in gratitude for everything that we have.

I am sure you will agree that each of us has many gifts to be grateful to God for giving us:

- Our family,
- Our friends,
- Our faith, and,
- As evidenced by our presence here today, our spiritual home - St. Cecilia parish.

St. Cecilia has been a constant for us all. Like our home, it is there when we need it, providing fellowship, comfort and support. And like our homes, our parish needs money – our treasure given through our weekly offertory – in order to continue to be there when we need it.



The "Stewardship of Treasure Program" is our opportunity to fulfill our obligation to be Stewards of God's Church by helping to make sure St. Cecilia parish has the financial resources it needs to operate today - for our benefit - and tomorrow, for the benefit of those that follow us.

The "*Stewardship of Treasure Program*" is our opportunity to prayerfully consider how we can be better Stewards of our parish through a sustained and consistent increase in our offertory giving.

Our goal – and the measure of whether our "Stewardship of Treasure Program" has succeeded – is whether we achieve equal sacrifice, not equal giving. The treasure that we each have is different; we are not asked to each give the same amount. What is asked is that we each make an equal sacrifice in our giving.

If we are to succeed – if we are to be good Stewards – each one of us must give serious consideration to a sustained and consistent increase in our weekly offering to St. Cecilia parish. Again, our goal is equal sacrifice, not equal giving.

As I said when I began, I am not asking for you to make a commitment today. My role was to introduce the "Stewardship of Treasure Program" which is rolling out over the next few weeks. Next weekend, two other parishioners will review with us all our parish's finances. They will also review the increased giving tables, and answer some frequently asked questions. Then, 2 weeks from today, we will have our Commitment Weekend. During Commitment Weekend, Fr. McKenna will address us and, at that time, we will pass out Intention Cards right here in church.

We are off to a good start. But, our work is not done. As faithful Stewards, we all have a way to go in order to achieve the success that our parish wants – and needs – in order to survive and flourish into the future.

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