



Manual for a Parish Stewardship Campaign

Diocese of Tyler



# I LOVE MY PARISH

## DIOCESE OF TYLER

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## Section 1. An Introduction and How to Use this Manual

### 1a. *I Love My Parish*: Parish Stewardship in the Diocese of Tyler

#### **Mission:**

The mission of Parish Stewardship is to help every parish in the Diocese of Tyler grow in stewardship. That is, the Diocese serve each parish in fostering love for God which, deeply rooted in the Word & Sacrament, manifests itself in a life lived as a steward of God's gifts. The Diocese will assist parishes in encouraging parishioners to be devoted caretakers of the time, abilities, and resources that have been bestowed upon them. By listening to God's Word on stewardship, the parishioners can understand their call to holiness as being applied to every aspect of their lives, as a call to imitate Christ not only in their prayer but also in their dealings with the ordinary circumstances in which they find themselves—with their marriage, family, workplace, community, and with the time, talent, and resources which God has entrusted to them. In this way, the call to stewardship will be experienced as the call to relationship with Christ.

#### **Strategic Plan:**

A practical goal of Parish Stewardship is to help parishes implement a complete stewardship process. This begins in giving the pastor tools to help lead his parish along this process. From the pastor's own commitment to and understanding of stewardship flows the instruction of his parish in this way of living. This leads then to the enrichment of every parish activity with the understanding of God's call to stewardship & discipleship. As it relates to a parishioner's stewardship of resources, abilities, and time, each parish will use October as a time of particular focus on stewardship, culminating in parishioners making concrete commitments to the Parish.

The lead-up to this commitment will begin early in the pastor's selection of a stewardship focus group. This group will plan out both the parish's annual "I Love My Parish" campaign, including the necessary publicity, administrative support, and execution of the program. The rough timeline of this is July to October.

Outside of the specific annual campaign, the focus group will work throughout the rest of the year in supporting the pastor in imbuing parish activities with principles of stewardship. The focus group can also use this time for assessment and refinement of its past fall campaign.

#### **Basic Outline of "I Love My Parish":**

- A pastor's and focus group study of stewardship & "I Love My Parish", resulting with the pastor constructing his own understanding of what stewardship may look like within his Parish.
- Selection of a stewardship focus group, which will lead the campaign "on the ground" of the Parish. In consultation with the pastor, the group will study stewardship and envision its application within the particular Parish.
- An "Action-plan" for the fall campaign, depending on the particular style desired by the focus-group & pastor, which will lead up to...
- A "Commitment Sunday", when the parish is asked to make specific commitments to the Parish of its time, resources, and abilities.
- A planned process for the rest of the year, which includes continuing education & assessment on stewardship in the parish.

## 1b. How to Use this Manual: a Guide for Pastors

### What Does this Manual Offer a Pastor?

#### 1. Practical Benefits

The *I Love My Parish* process has many benefits, and can be utilized effectively to:

- Increase the financial support of the parish.
- Increase involvement from parishioners in areas of time and abilities.
- Develop loyalty and support for the parish in general.
- Give strength to the parish during the “off times” of the year.
- A combination of the above.

#### 2. A Foundation for the Giving of Resources

To the average parishioner, stewardship is a synonym for fundraising. It is a "churchy" word for getting money from the parishioners. This is not what stewardship is all about.

Stewardship encompasses the whole of life. The best use of our time, the proper use of our abilities and the acquiring, administering and dispensing of resources are all a part of the fabric of stewardship.

*I Love My Parish* offers a unique opportunity to lead the parishioners to reflect upon their level of giving in the stewardship of their resources as a spiritual exercise.

We should not harp continuously on the giving of resources. However, **it is just as detrimental** to the parish and the parishioners to avoid giving pastoral leadership in this vital area. The *I Love My Parish* process offers a platform for sharing the teachings of the Church about the disciple's response to—his/her stewardship of—God's gift of resources.

It is imperative to approach growth in stewardship as a process—not a program. It is a never ending opportunity for glorifying God and growing as effective disciples. It is a way of life.

As the parish leader, the pastor should approach the stewardship of resources with a positive **enthusiasm**. Parishioners will thank you for your leadership in this area of stewardship. It is only proper since everything that we have comes from God and really belongs to Him. We need to teach God's people to use His resources for His glory.

**Remember, Father,** "If it is to be, it is up to me".

#### 3. A Foundation for the Giving of Time & Abilities

The wise leader offers positive leadership in teaching parishioners the role of the disciple's stewardship of time and abilities. This is not a secondary level of stewardship. It is equally, if not more, important than the stewardship of resources. Jim Smith's saying, "Money follows Spiritual energy", reflects the essential nature of leading disciples through *all* areas of stewardship.

The *I Love My Parish* process gives pastors a platform for discovering the abilities of parishioners. The astute pastor will not try to do everything. He will discover and utilize the capabilities of the *army* of parishioners who

are waiting for the call to offer themselves in ministry. As the pastor empowers the parishioners he strengthens his own pastoral ministry and effectiveness. He is able to free up time for perfecting and performing those areas of leadership that are unique to the role of pastor.

Every parishioner has a God-given talent that is needed in the parish. Some are multi-talented. *I Love My Parish* offers an ongoing process for parish growth, constantly challenging parishioners to make their time and their abilities available. Refraining from this area of leadership will deny the pastor of the opportunity of expanding the services and ministries of the parish.

### **Using Manual for *I Love My Parish***

1. "Begin at the Beginning" Develop an understanding of Stewardship
  - a. The Section on "What is Stewardship" and "Time, Abilities, & Resources" offer a start for understanding stewardship. (Section 2, 3)
  - b. Many outside resources are available for continuing learning and some are referenced in the manual. (Section 2b, 5c)
  - c. Help the Focus-Group **Define** Stewardship (see Section 2)
2. Envision stewardship in *your* parish: As the initiator and leader of this process, it is important that the pastor know the foundations of stewardship, but also envision its particular application in the parish.
  - a. Determine & Define the challenge-areas within the parish which you hope the process will address (consult with Focus Group).
  - b. Understand and give guidance concerning which practical measures may fit your parish best during the annual campaign (Section 5).
3. Choose a stewardship Focus Group: this group—not a static committee, but a dynamic working group—will implement the process and help apply your vision for stewardship in your parish.
  - a. Use manual to understand what Focus Group will be doing (Section 4, 5).
  - b. Teach. Lay the foundation by leading Focus Group in understanding stewardship (Section 2)
  - c. Review Action Plan and ongoing work of Focus Group as you see fit

### **Considerations as Leader of *I Love My Parish***

- He must be optimistic in his leadership style. To voice uncertainty in this vital area of leadership fails to offer the leadership-strength that a parish needs to embrace Catholic stewardship as a lifestyle.
- He must not depend on parishioners becoming effective stewards by accident. The pastor must learn and then he must teach.
- He must lead by example. The old proverb, "I would rather see a sermon than hear a sermon", is certainly true in the minds of most parishioners.
- He must be willing to delegate. No pastor can hope to do by himself all that is asked of him. In parishes both large and small there are those parishioners who are willing to consider stewardship as a way of life.

## 1c. How to Use this Manual: a Guide for Stewardship Focus Groups

### The Task

**The purpose of a parish Stewardship Focus Group is to assist the members of the parish family in developing an understanding of and a commitment to stewardship through a well planned, year-round stewardship emphasis in the parish. The focus group will use all functions of the parish to help individuals and the parish grow in the stewardship of time, abilities and resources.**

You, as a member of your stewardship focus group, are tasked with making the stewardship process a reality in your parish. This Manual should guide you through an introduction to stewardship principles and into the beginning of an action plan for an *I Love My Parish* campaign. It will be both a reference manual and beginner's toolkit for implementation of a stewardship focus in your parish.

### Using Manual for I Love My Parish

1. "Begin at the Beginning" Develop an understanding of stewardship.
  - a. Read the Section on "What is Stewardship" and "Time, Abilities, & Resources" offer a start for understanding stewardship. (Section 2, 3)
  - b. Meet and discuss with the pastor about his particular understanding of stewardship.
  - c. Many outside resources are available for continuing learning and some are referenced in the manual. (Section 2b, 5c)
  - d. As a Focus-Group, **define** stewardship and find times for discussion and reflection on what stewardship is (see Section 2)
2. Envision stewardship in *your* parish: Assess your parish, determining how stewardship may be applied to your parish.
  - a. As a group, Read & Study the *I Love My Parish* program (Section 4) and its suggested means (Section 5).
  - b. Assess the Parish: Determine & Define the challenge-areas within the parish which you hope the process will address. Gather & reassess any past-used programs/means (if available) for running a giving campaign.
  - c. Read/See resources for Parish Stewardship to spark ideas (Section 5b, 5c).
3. Set the Process in Motion
  - a. Create an Action Plan based on the particular focus and using the particular means your parish has decided to use (Section 4c).
  - b. Use resources and samples offered as reference in creating publications & events. Feel free to use any *I Love My Parish* branded material given (Section 5).
  - c. Use Diocesan support and vendor support as needed to create and publish materials for program (Section 5c).

**It is in your hands...Make it Happen!**

### **Considerations as Parishioner-Leaders of *I Love My Parish***

- The leadership of the pastor will be of little avail if there is not a cadre of parishioners who are willing and ready to join with the pastor in this quest for a relationship with God through Catholic stewardship.
- Leaders who pray and seek the leadership of the Holy Spirit are vital to the effort.
- Parish leaders must lead by example. They must be positive in attitude and they must strive to learn and live stewardship.
- Stewardship development is not an accidental process. There must be a plan. The plan must fit the parish. The *I Love My Parish* approach is flexible and can be effective in every parish situation.

## Section 2. The Foundation: An Introduction to Stewardship

### 2a. Defining Stewardship

*The absolute first step of the "I Love My Parish" program is for the pastor & focus group under his leadership to ground themselves in an understanding of stewardship as a disciple's response. Without mastering the principles of stewardship, it will be difficult to teach the parish this way of sacrificial giving.*

#### **What is a Steward?**

*"Who, then, is the faithful and prudent steward whom the master will put in charge of his servants to distribute [the] food allowance at the proper time?" Luke, 12:42*

There is an old account, from the reign of Queen Anne of England, listing all of her chief officers and servants including their salaries and descriptions of their offices. The chief steward heads them all. He was an honored and trusted officer or servant. The position demanded great intelligence, initiative, and integrity. It was a distinct honor and a privilege to be a steward.

What then, is a steward? Literally, steward means the keeper or manager of the house, or the overseer of an estate who employs servants, caters at banquets, represents the master in business dealings or in the courts. The office reached its height in the lord high steward who presided over the coronation of the king.

Our Lord used the image of a steward in a similar sense, as a great title which carried equally great obligations. Consider the broad range a dictionary gives "steward," listing four shades of meaning:

1. One employed to manage domestic affairs, supervise servants, collect rents, etc.
2. One who directs affairs or manages.
3. One who supervises the provision and distribution of food.
4. A fiscal agent.

Synonyms: Administrator, Agent, Director, Manager, Overseer, Representative, Supervisor, Trustee.

It is in this high and honorable sense that the word *steward* is used in the parables related to being a steward.

#### Steward Used in the Old Testament

For even more definition regarding the literal meaning of *steward*, consider its references in the Old Testament. In Genesis 15:2 Abram prayed, "Oh Lord God, what good will your gifts be, if I keep on being childless and have as my heir the steward of my house, Eliezer?" That is to say, "If I should die without a child, my **steward** would



inherit all my property." It was this steward whom Abram sent into a far country to select and to bring a bride for his son Isaac. This was an honorable but delicate task that could be assigned only to a wise and trusted servant and friend.

When Jacob sent his sons into Egypt to buy grain because of the famine in Canaan, Joseph recognized his brothers and instructed his steward how to treat them. It was the steward who put the money in the sacks, spread the banquet, and in general represented the prime minister, Joseph. (Genesis 43-44)

In the days of King Elah, his steward had social standing high enough to entertain the king. (1 Kings 16:8)

When King David called the leading men of the kingdom to solve important public problems, the stewards were included. (1 Chronicles 28:1)

In the days of King Nebuchadnezzar, the steward looked after the training of the princes. (Daniel :11)

### **What is Stewardship?**

Christ's call to be his disciple necessitates a gift of the whole self. God grants us our life, time on earth, our mind, heart, and will to do with his creation as He intends—to offer it back to him in filial love. We are called to this commitment of sacrifice within our prayer life and family life, as well as in the caretaking of our time, abilities, and resources. This commitment is called stewardship.

Considering the breadth and import of a steward's role as defined above, Christ chose a packed image to use as a model for exercising our discipleship. For pastors and parishioners alike, you may have heard the word (even used the word) without ever being able to define it. To communicate stewardship effectively, you will want a short, practical, working definition of stewardship.

As practice in refining your ideas on stewardship, write your own definition of stewardship before seeing some others:

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On the next page are a few of the many definitions one can find. Perhaps none of them is perfect; however, each presents one or more aspects of the truth. Think them over. Compare them. Work out your own definition.

"Stewardship is trusteeship."

"Stewardship is applied Christianity."

"Stewardship is the managing of life and all its resources for God and the good of all."

"Stewardship is complete surrender to the will of God."

"Stewardship is the expression of one's Christian experience."

"Stewardship is the administration of material and spiritual possessions entrusted to men by God for the advancement of the Kingdom of God."

"Stewardship is the using of all of one's gifts, possessions and powers as a trust from God."

"Stewardship is partnership with God."

"Stewardship is caring for God's property for the advancement of His kingdom."

"Discipleship stewardship means the dedication of the whole of life and the whole of God's resources to the betterment of the whole world."

"Catholic Christian stewardship may be defined as a sense of moral responsibility for all of life."

"Discipleship stewardship is the recognition of God's ownership of one's person, one's time, one's powers, one's abilities and one's resources, and the faithful use of these for the advancement of Christ's kingdom in this world".

"Catholic Christian stewardship is the practice of systematic and proportionate giving of time, abilities and material resources based on the conviction that these are a trust from God to be used in his service for the benefit of mankind."

### **Define It For Your Parish**

Based on your consideration of stewardship through this manual and study of stewardship as a way of living, your parish **will need to define stewardship for your parishioners** in moving forward with the *I Love My Parish* campaign. Without this, referring to stewardship in a parish will be no more than a secular approach to acquiring leaders and funding for the parish.

In their pastoral letter, "Stewardship: A Disciple's Response", the USCCB defines stewardship thus:

**"Who is a Christian Steward? One who receives God's gifts gratefully, cherishes and tends them in a responsible and accountable manner, shares them in justice and love with others, and returns them with increase to the Lord" (pg. 9)**

## 2b. Learning Stewardship: Suggestions, Resources

In order to communicate successfully and inspire the parish to sacrificial giving, it is critical that the pastor and Focus Group have command of the basic principles of stewardship. The more time devoted to prayer and study of stewardship, the better. Consider the following:

1. *A Walk-through Study of US Bishop's Pastoral Letter, "Stewardship: A Disciple's Response" (or Similar Publication)* This **Pastoral Letter**, in its Tenth Anniversary Edition, walks the reader through a comprehensive understanding of stewardship, and is interwoven with quotes from Scripture & the Saints. Further, this edition offers reflection questions and study guides for a group study. This is well worth it.
  - Consider conducting a meeting of the Focus Group (if on a regular basis, all the better) to read a passage and discuss.
  - The publication also includes a comprehensive "Resource Manual", which offers practical references and guides to stewardship within a parish setting (more fitting to help create an Action Plan once the Focus Group is ready; see Section 4).
  - Find it at [www.usccbpublishing.org](http://www.usccbpublishing.org) (Search: stewardship)
2. *Other Reading:* There are hundreds of publications, books, pamphlets and DVDs on stewardship from other sources (more than can be listed here). Here's a couple starting points:
  - See ***catholicstewardship.com*** for resources & publications compiled by the International Catholic Stewardship Conference. They also list other vendors from whom to obtain materials.
  - ***Lumen Gentium*** (Chapters II, IV, V) from [www.vatican.va](http://www.vatican.va)
3. *Materials available through Our Sunday Visitor (contact Diocese first if interested)*
  - **DVD** containing two videos of the late Archbishop Thomas Murphy on the spirituality of stewardship.
  - **Pamphlets:** Several pamphlets are available addressing components of stewardship. All pamphlets are available in English and Spanish. There is also a small catalog outlining all pamphlets and includes pricing. These are good for quick-reference or for distribution to parishioners.
  - **Webinars:** from Loaves + Fishes stewardship educational webinars scheduled in 2013.
4. *Guest Speaker, presenter*
  - **Other Parish:** There are parishes within the Diocese of Tyler who have run similar processes. Invite a pastor or parishioner to a Focus Group to speak about stewardship and its meaning in their parish.
  - **Diocese:** This is what we're here for! There are several persons at the Chancery who can come teach/speak on stewardship to a focus group or parish.

## 2c. More Reflections on the Meaning of Stewardship: Approaches for Guiding a Parish

*In communicating the principles of Christ-centered stewardship of all that God has given us, it is helpful to have several ways of approaching the subject. Here are a few:*

### **1. Overview of USCCB pastoral letter, “Stewardship: A Disciple’s Response”**

*The pastoral letter is a great starting place. Familiarity with it assures an effective and authentic approach to stewardship. This is merely a brief summary of the spirituality espoused by the bishops in the letter.*

#### *Introduction*

By our baptism, we have a vocation—a calling—to be disciples of Jesus Christ. This call is urgent, personal, and requires a full response. There is no shortage of obstacles to this calling, as in our increasingly secularized environment there is pressure to marginalize and privatize faith to make room for materialism and consumerism. Nonetheless, the Lord wishes us to “be perfect...as your heavenly Father is perfect,” (Mt 5:48) and answer his call in a way which touches on every aspect of our lives. Discipleship is the context of any discussion of stewardship.

#### *The Call*

Stewardship begins with the invitation of Christ through our personal vocation. This call is urgent, as is our need to care for, nurture, and discern it. Our vocation will require the unique gifts and circumstances given to us by God, and our stewardship of vocation necessitates listening to the voice of the Lord as to how he wants us to use these. Following our vocation won’t always be comfortable—the cross—as it requires every bit of us.

#### *Jesus’ Way*

Christ is the supreme teacher of stewardship, as his self-emptying was complete. Further, Christ made it clear that the accounting of our stewardship will relate both to spiritual realities AND temporal realities (the things of this earth). Through his parables and teachings Christ warned that He expects a *return* from the goods he bestows—this includes not just those specially ordained for church ministry (clergy & religious), but all the faithful. While the task may seem daunting, the reward is great! In fact, Jesus tells us the reward is a hundredfold!

#### *Living as a Steward*

Vatican II teaches that all human activity—everything you and I do throughout an ordinary day—must be fulfilled in such a way that builds up the Kingdom of God. From the beginning, God asked us to be *co-creators* with him in Eden (as when he called on Adam to “cultivate and care for” the earth (Gen 2:15)) through work. As stewards of our work and world, we too are asked to recognize the beauty of the earth, the beauty of noble human work, and “acknowledge God’s dominion” (*Pastoral Letter*, 27) in all of it. Through the redemption of Jesus Christ, we are further asked to be *co-redeemers* with Him as part of being a “royal priesthood” (1 Peter 2:9). That is, we can join our selves to the sacrifice of Jesus Christ by offering our own prayers, sufferings, joys, and work to the Lord on the altar.

#### *Stewards of the Church*

As a member of the One Body that is the Church, a steward recognizes his duty to care for that body. According to his gifts and talents, the steward first cares for the “Domestic Church”—his family and home. This then extends to caring for his local parish, supporting generously its programs and mission. Finally, the local Church—the diocese—must also be supported in accordance with his means. In union with the Church, the steward will be transformed into an instrument of Evangelization, the mission of the Church. The devoted caretaking of his time and talents will radiate—almost unintentionally—from him and draw those around him closer to Jesus Christ. As part of this, a steward strives to build up his community in solidarity. The focal point of all his stewardship—the tending of his gifts for the advance of the Kingdom of God—is the Eucharist, which as the cause of our unity enables us to unite all our stewardship to the Father in love.

### *The Christian Steward*

Stewardship requires conversion of heart—new insight into God’s call. A steward, conscientious and faithful to his vocation, is accountable for everything he is and everything that has been given to him. While this vocation to be a steward takes countless forms—as countless as the combinations of time and talent—the model for all the Church is the Blessed Virgin Mary. Through her faithful “yes” to God, she exemplified a most perfect stewardship of her vocation and generosity in its fulfillment. Her stewardship over her children continues, as we can look to her for guidance.

## **2. The Giver not the Gift, the Parishioner not the Parish: Stewardship’s Place in the Parish (Jim Smith)**

*Stewardship is the management of what belongs to another.*

The emphasis on stewardship within the local parish should be to teach God's Word regarding the handling of all he entrusts into our hands. While in financial areas the stewardship process should seek to lead parishioners to move from where they are now to achieving the tithe as the norm, there should be equal importance attached to stewardship involvement in the offering of our time, our abilities and our influence to God.

Even as it touches upon finances, the stewardship process in the local parish is **first of all about God**. To be a disciple is to do the work of God. In the second place, the stewardship process is about the **people of the parish**. These are God's people and their responsibility as individuals and as a parish family collectively is to be "found faithful" in the stewardship of their everyday life. When these two emphases are in place, then the third—the participation of parishioners in the joyful presentation of their resources to ensure the success and growth of the parish—may follow naturally.

### *Time*

The time for opportunity and fulfillment in our lives is qualitative, not quantitative. Within the succession of minutes and days which we measure by clock and calendar, God gives us the opportunity to make it an offering to Him and Him in our neighbor. Stewardship of time means living with a constant sense of the presence of God.

### *Abilities. (Talents)*

Our abilities are given to us by God for the abundant living of our lives for Him, for others and for ourselves. St. Paul reminds us that gifts are given “to equip God's people for work in His service to the building up of the Body

of Christ." (Ephesians 4:12) These gifts cannot be divided or segmented, some to be used for making money and achieving success and certain others set apart for God. Christ desires all our gifts, our abilities, our skills and our talents.

### *Resources (Treasure)*

We are trustees of treasure. Money and resources have been placed in our hands temporarily. We control them, but they are not ultimately ours. We must account for how they are used.

Within this context, giving to the Church has a definite place. Our call is to give sacrificially toward the tithe and beyond. We give to fulfill Christ's mission, as God commissions us to do.

As leaders, remember that stewardship relates not merely to one aspect of our lives and livelihood, **brought in by a parish ceremonially in the hope of dividends**, but to every aspect of the Christian life.

### **3. God's Offer: Stewardship as Relationship**

The call to stewardship takes the form of the cross. While the parish will be tempted to think of stewardship as a chance to harp upon the material needs of the parish (and real needs they are!), it is more truly an invitation to follow the way of the cross in joyful abandonment to God. Therefore, Stewardship is based not upon "giving to a need," but upon the need of the giver to give. Christ spoke to many people about money, but never because the Temple had a need. It was always the one to whom He spoke who had the need. It was always someone who had put up an obstacle between himself and God, thereby robbing him of union with God. The rich man "went away sad, for he had many possessions" (Mark 10:22)

Stewardship is a matter of discipleship and not a matter of money. It is centered on our response to God and not what possessions we have or how much we give. Stewardship is not a law or a rule. It is an offer. God enters into our world and offers us relationship with Him, as our Lord offered to the rich young man. We do not have to accept. But if we do, the reward is a hundred-fold (Mark 10:30).

### **4. God the Owner and Man the Steward**

#### *The Common Sense Approach*

"The LORD God then took the man and settled him in the garden of Eden, to cultivate and care for it" (Genesis 2:15). Called to cultivate the earth, man takes the God-given materials and uses his God-given skill to refine those materials. The finished product therefore also belongs to God.

While God certainly fathers us—and thus owns us—as Creator, he further brings us into possession as "sons in the Son", by which "you received a spirit of adoption, through which we cry, *Abba, Father!*" (Romans 8:15) Christ won this, our divine son-ship, with his blood: "For you have been purchased at a price" (1 Cor 6:20),

Stewardship is based on the fact that everything, even our very life, belongs to God and we are stewards of it. By our created nature we have inherited this stewardship. By the nature of our baptism—our adoption by God—we are compelled to sanctify it. All are stewards. Some are faithful stewards and some are unfaithful stewards. We

may dispute God's ownership explicitly (the atheist) or implicitly through selfishness. The man who seeks everything for himself, by dissipation or by hoarding, implicitly denies God's ownership. In contrast, the good steward, knowing that "we were indeed buried with him through baptism into death" (Romans 6:4), places all he has onto the Cross with Christ, who has purchased our very life with his sacrifice.

### *An Accounting of our Stewardship*

No day-to-day checkup of his stewardship is made. Remember the parable in Luke 12:42-48, "If that servant says to himself, 'My Master delays his coming'..." In the end, he must answer to God, the master, "on an unexpected day and at an unknown hour." The words of our Lord to the unjust steward will apply to all: "Prepare a full account of your stewardship" (Luke 16:2). Jesus, in the parable of the talents in St. Matthew 25, warns that we will be judged by the increase or lack thereof we have made with the things given us. "So each of us shall give account of himself to God" (Romans 14:12).

## Section 3: More Ideas & Reflections on the Stewardship of Time, Abilities, & Resources

*Use this section to help encourage further thought and understanding on time, abilities, and resources. The following gives various approaches (anecdotal, scriptural, and otherwise) to teaching and talking about these three particulars of our stewardship, and envisions how the giving of each may be an occasion for deeper union with God.*

### **“We Do Fundraisers”: A Brief Note on Fundraisers vs. Stewardship**

All parishioners are stewards, as they all have been given an allotment of time, abilities, and resources. Parishes may attempt to raise funds in a variety of ways. However, the answer to funding the parishes and filling them with capable, dedicated volunteers is to be found in the principles of stewardship.

The parish has a choice to make. Either we continue to try the various ineffective approaches to providing for the funding and personnel needs of the parish in a vacuum or we opt to do it in the context of discipleship. Reliance on *fundraisers* produces erratic, inconsistent giving which ebbs and flows based on the sense of *parish* need, and not the *parishioner* need, causing spiritual fatigue and increasing passivity to “what’s next.” Stewardship produces constant and pro-active response to God which yields ever-increasing generosity and a spirit of sacrifice.

Stewardship does not develop funds—it develops good stewards. These stewards provide for the needs of the parish. To ignore stewardship penalizes the parishioners by failing to lead them to experience the joy of being “found faithful” in the use of their time and possessions.

### **3a. The Stewardship of Time**

"I tell you brothers, the time is running out." (1 Corinthians 7:29)

"Teach us to count our days aright that we may gain wisdom of heart." (Psalms 90:12)

"Making the most of the opportunity because the days are evil." (Ephesians 5:12)

"Night is coming." (John 9:4)

"There is an appointed time for everything, and a time for every affair under the heavens, A time to be born, and a time to die; a time to plant and a time to uproot the plant..."Ecclesiastes 3:1-4)

Webster consumes almost a page in the New World College Dictionary in an attempt to come up with a definition of time. In a nutshell, it says: “Time is the indefinite, unlimited duration in which things are considered as happening in the past, present, or future; every moment there has ever been or ever will be. Time is the entire period of existence of the known universe.” We could go on and on and still not fully encapsulate the meaning of time.

#### **Time is a gift.**

Seneca said, "Nothing is ours except time," in that time is ours only to use. It is given to us for merely a season. We cannot create a moment, we cannot borrow a moment, nor can we destroy a moment—but we may waste time. All of the time we have is in trust from God to be used for doing the things that need to be done—for self-improvement and enrichment, for work, for service to others, and for the worship of God. We are responsible before God for how we use or misuse our time.



## **Time is a Mystery**

The good steward realizes that time is a great mystery. Time, like space, is a miracle that only God can create or comprehend. Even more profound than the fact that time is a God-given mystery is the realization that we have the privilege of using it. Frequently, we hear people remark that they do not have time. Wrong! We all have the same amount of time in this moment. Here is a place where we are all level. The difference is not in the amount of time in a day but in how we use or misuse the time we have.

## **Time is Important**

The good steward knows that time is important. Benjamin Franklin said, "Dost thou love life? Then do not squander time, for that's the stuff that life is made of." Time is more important than money. Andrew Carnegie said, just before his death, that he would give two hundred million dollars for ten more years of life. When time ends, life ends. When time ends, opportunities to serve end. When time ends, opportunities to grow in sanctity end. Time! Can you think of anything more important than time?

## **Examine your Use of Time**

We must recognize the stewardship of time. How many hours, days, weeks, years pass by that we look back on and wish we could recall them? The Christian tradition of a daily examination of conscience, a short spiritual exercise of accounting of the things done well or poorly that day, along with resolutions for improvement the next day, is a pillar of the stewardship of time.

The Roman Emperor Vespasian, at the close of each day, would recount the activities that had filled the day and try to recall some worthy deed that he had done. If he could not, he would wring his hands and cry out, "Friends, I have lost a day!" George Eliot stressed the contrary idea in his poem:

"If you sit down at set of sun  
and count the acts that you have done, and counting find  
one self denying deed, one word .  
That eased the heart of him who heard; One glance most kind,  
That fell like sunshine where it went—Then you may count that day well spent."

## **Constant Prayer**

The Psalmist had the habit of praying at least three times a day. "At dusk, dawn and at noon, I will pray". (Psalms 55:17). If we live constantly as if in the presence of God (and so we are), He will direct our paths. We do not have to lean on our own counsel. J.C. Penney, the merchant, said, "Actually the challenge of living effectively makes it necessary to pray all through the day." It is our privilege to seek divine help for the order in which we use our time and live our lives.

## **Budgeting our Time**

It is impossible to be a good steward of our time if we do not budget it. At first, a detailed budgeting of our time seems like a *waste* of time. However, planning and budgeting time actually keeps us from wasting time by

ordering the various tasks and obligations we have. A time budget should include time for: Worship & Prayer, Work, Service, Cultural Activities, Recreation, & Friendship. Time is a God-given gift and it is too precious to waste. It is fixed. It cannot be hurried up or slowed down. How we use it or misuse it is up to each of us. Use it or lose it!

### 3b. The Stewardship of Abilities

Some refer to this as the stewardship of talents. We prefer to call it abilities. While it refers to the parable of the talents directly, talent nowadays denotes an extraordinary ability to perform in a given area, something through which a person excels. We all don't have *extraordinary* talent. However, we all have abilities. How we use or misuse these abilities determines our level of stewardship. Stewardship messages within the parish almost always lumps time and abilities together. There is an obvious connection; our abilities or our talents make up what we do during the time allotted to us.

#### **The Common Scenario**

The average parish has experienced the following scenario: A weekend is chosen as the weekend to emphasize the giving of abilities for the good of the parish. The usual way is to list a multitude of services on a sheet of paper and ask the parishioners to check off the areas of interest that they believe suit what they can do. The lists are usually crowded onto the paper in small print. The eager parishioner checks them off and turns them in. Usually, the parishioner turns the list in during or after the same mass during which he received it. No time is given to explain the list, nor is there time for the parishioner to ask questions or to pray about his or her response to the list. Dozens of priests have opened file cabinets and shown me the stacks of responses that they have received from this commitment exercise. The following is a typical response; "I am just so busy that I have not had time to follow through on these commitments. I feel guilty about it and guess I will just add this stack to those that we did not get to last year."

Meanwhile, the parishioner is wondering what happened. Was the service offered not needed or desired? Does the pastor think that I am not capable of actually performing the service? What happened? This is a lose-lose scenario. The pastor loses. The parishioner loses. Most of all, the parish loses the services that were offered.

The parishioners want to help the pastor. The Church needs these parishioners. Use them. Trust them. Lead them. Empower them. Many desire to relieve the pastor of your overbearing load. Allow them to do so.

#### **Abilities' Connection to Resource**

When Bishop Eugene Gerber was the Bishop of the Diocese of Wichita, Kansas, he gave stellar leadership in areas of stewardship growth and development. Many years ago, he suggested a unique commitment card for the parishes to use at the time of the annual stewardship campaign. The card was circulated to all of the parishes of the diocese. The unique thing about it was that there was no mention of commitment of resources—only time and abilities. Asked why he did this, he answered: "If a person makes a sacrificial commitment of his or her time and abilities, there will be a significant follow-through in the area of resources." This hearkens back to Jim Smith's saying, "Money always follows Spiritual energy". By focusing on the areas of time and abilities, parish stewardship can cease to be a parish fund-raiser and can become a way of living.

### 3c. The Stewardship of Resources

First of all let us be reminded that stewardship is not fund raising. It is not a scheme or a gimmick to trick the parishioners into giving more of their possessions. The stewardship of Resources is, instead, another of the important areas of stewardship.

Indeed, parishes everywhere must concern themselves constantly with the need for funding to promote and support the ministries of the parish. However, the giver, not the gift, is what concerns God. Emphasizing and reiterating this is central to stewardship.

#### **Leaders Must Lead**

It is not uncommon to hear a pastor say, "I do not concern myself with the money. I leave that to the people of the parish." One pastor even said, "I am so very proud of the fact that I have never said the word *money* at any of the masses or meetings of the parish. I always leave the room quietly when the subject comes up." While well-intended, this approach to leadership, or should we say, lack of leadership, will cripple the parish and deprive it of growth in vital areas.

The leadership in the parish is best exercised when the "trickle-down" approach is utilized. There are levels of leadership that are necessary if a parish is to become characterized as a "Stewardship Parish."

## Section 4: I Love My Parish

*Grounded firmly in an understanding of stewardship, now we come to it—the I Love My Parish Process for the parishes of the Diocese of Tyler.*

### 4a. Why “I Love My Parish” & a Summary of the Process

#### **Why “I Love My Parish”?**

Using the first person, “I”, personalizes the campaign for every parish member. It is vital that parishioners come to think of the stewardship & discipleship a call to *me*, rather than “the pastor”, “the Bishop” or “the pious folks”. The campaign seeks to remind parishioners that the call to holiness is universal.

“Love” affirms that stewardship is a response to God. “Love” is positive, as is this process, which aims to remind people of the joy of serving their parish and seeing it grow. Love requires response, sacrifice, generosity: “No one has greater love than this, to lay down one’s life for one’s friends” (John 15:13). In this way, for the Christian, love is not a sentimental love, but a constant self-gift. We should develop as stewards because of our love for God, His work and His people. Love is the foundation for discipleship.

“Love,” in this sense, is a verb, denoting something that I am supposed to do. It calls to action. No one can love on my behalf. *I* must love. *I* must do it. *I* must act. Stewardship as a way of life does not occur through passivity, but through action on my part. Love requires a response.

“My Parish” emphasizes that the parish is worthy of our love. Your parish is the place where Christian life began in baptism and culminates in the Mass—through your local parish the sacraments of the Church flow. The parish is the most basic unit of the Church just like the family is the basic unit of a society. However, people do not give generously to that which they do not love. Their giving is not cheerful giving when it is seen as nothing more than a duty. Those who give out of a sense of duty usually try to find a way to give the least amount possible. Those who give out of love find a way to give sacrificially.

We have an opportunity to help parishioners express their love for God in a tangible way by leading them to love and support of their parish church.

### **Summary of *I Love My Parish***

Introduction: *I Love My Parish* is a process that is designed for the local parish and offers an approach that can be very helpful in the following areas:

- Conducting an Annual Stewardship Renewal
- Intensification of the Stewardship Process in a parish in anticipation of a time period of traditionally low-giving (summer vacation period).
- Renewal to a capital funding process that is in need of a renewed energy.
- Promotion of the giving of time and abilities (talents).
- Helpful in leading the parish community to become more aware of their parish and to develop loyalty to the parish, the mission of the parish and the ministries of the parish.

Characteristics: Some of the characteristics of the *I Love My Parish* process are

- It is equally effective in any size parish.
- Maximum flexibility makes it possible for each parish to craft the process in such a way that it reflects the local parish and addresses the needs and challenges of the local parish.
- It is a positive approach to giving.
- Church teaching, prayer, and liturgy are emphasized in the giving process.
- The process is designed to include every member of the participating parish.
- Minimal organization is required.
- The process works best when planned for a three or four week period.
- The process leads to the climactic action of commitments being registered by members of the parish community.
- The *I Love My Parish* process is cost effective.

## 4b. The *I Love My Parish* Stewardship Focus Group

### **Purpose**

The purpose of a parish stewardship focus group is to assist the members of the parish family in developing an understanding of and a commitment to stewardship through a well planned, year-round stewardship emphasis in the parish. The Focus Group will use all functions of the parish to help individuals and the parish grow in the stewardship of time, abilities and resources.

### **Overview**

The pastor fulfills a vital role in the effectiveness of stewardship in a parish. His attitude, encouragement, involvement and leadership are essential to a parish stewardship process. The pastor should help train, encourage, and counsel the dedicated parishioners who serve on the Focus Group. However...

The pastor cannot do it all by himself. He needs the assistance of dedicated individuals who are willing to embrace stewardship and help lead the parish in becoming a Catholic stewardship parish.

Every parish should form a stewardship focus group. In most parishes, this Focus Group should consist of four or five individuals. In the very small parishes, one or two persons working closely with the pastor may be sufficient. The Focus Group should be introduced to the parish and recognized as one of the standing committee functions of the parish. A chairperson should be designated and meetings should be conducted at regular intervals.

It is important to note that the stewardship focus group is not the same as the Finance Council. Stewardship involves more than finances. Stewardship development should place equal emphasis on all areas of a steward's accountability.

### **Focus Group Goals**

- Seek to understand Catholic stewardship using the manual and through guided study.
- Work with the pastor to make a careful assessment of the various needs of the Parish. This will also include needs *other than* require financial support—i.e. opportunities for service requiring time and abilities.
- Imbue parish publications and other communication tools with messaging that will “tell the story” of the parish, thereby inspiring personal commitment to the parish.
- Carefully and prayerfully plan a year-round stewardship process in the parish.
- Keep parish opportunities, ministries, and stewardship principles before the parish family.
- Use existing programs and organizations within the parish to communicate stewardship concepts & principles.
- Provide the opportunity of registering commitments.
- Remain Positive! Help the parishioners to learn the joy of being a Catholic Steward.
- Run the annual campaign that culminates in formal commitments on a “Commitment Sunday.” Organize visual aids, publications, the use of envelopes, speakers, and fellowship events that will teach stewardship and support a commitment campaign.

#### 4c. The Basic Timeline of *I Love My Parish* & Focus Group Task List

##### **Basic Plan of Action**

Planning should be based on an understanding of the mission of the parish. The needs of the parish will be met more effectively if the stewardship focus group will:

1. Discuss the needs to be met during the year. Set outline for a study of the parish.
  - a. May use the Time & Abilities Committee list for ministry ideas in section 5b (pg. 33).
2. Based on study of parish, Write out objectives and set realistic goals in each area of stewardship development (Time, Abilities, Resource) for the fall campaign.
  - a. Goals are **Results** planned in light of the mission of the parish (tangible or intangible)
3. Determine the Action Plans needed to accomplish the goals. Action plans are the activities needed to accomplish or reach the goals.
  - a. Create *I Love My Parish* Calendar for fall campaign. (See Example Calendar at end of section)
  - b. Any theme/particular focus of your parish's campaign should be clearly set.
4. Assign responsibilities for follow-through using task list. Planned actions will more likely become reality when the above steps are written down; specific persons are given responsibilities and events placed on the parish calendar.
  - a. Leaders of a particular focus should know what parameters they have based on the particular vision of stewardship in that parish (set by group & pastor)
5. Execute Campaign with lead-up to formal commitments.
6. Repeat process (Study, Assessment, Action Plans) for the "off-time", which involves the continuation of Stewardship focus group until the next fall campaign
  - a. Areas of improvement during "off-times" go deeper, especially in areas of accountability & education.

## **Immediate Action—Start the Process!**

## The Parish Stewardship Focus Group – Jobs

To complete all of these goals, the Focus Group will have to define specific working roles. The following includes possible job descriptions. For each job, there should be **an assigned member** of the focus group. Whether the point person does much of the work or enlists a team of others to help (what a good way to get more involved quickly!), they will be accountable for that work being done. The various tasks taken on by the Focus Group will depend largely on what a particular parish envisions for its particular campaign.

Firstly, Big Picture / Always Jobs: *These jobs a pastor ought to be heavy involvement in*

- Stewardship Training / education. Ensures the education of the group in understanding Stewardship & the pastor's understanding of Stewardship within his Parish. The means: Organized study sessions, study groups, gather materials and resources, organize meetings.
- Parish Assessment / Vision: Someone who can study *the parish*, its areas of success and areas of need, the scope of its activities and ministries, and be able to *concretize the vision* of the parish from these observations into a VISION of Stewardship in that particular parish. This person should listen closely to his/her pastor, have an ear for the concerns of the Pastoral & Finance Council, and know all the active ministries of the parish well. Finally, this person reports the strengths and parish vision to communicate "where we're going".

Jobs Specific to Fall Campaign:

- Action Plan Author: As soon as it's able, the Focus group should have a member compile its specific action plan.
- Publications #1 (Content): Newsletter, bulletin, parishioner letters. Someone who can organize publications and/or write for written publications in support of the campaign.
- Publications #2 (Design): Visual aids (branding, good with logos or design thereof), and publication of cards or other material (digital?) that will be used for formal commitments of time, resources, and abilities.
- "Stories Coordinator": Someone who can identify and talk to parishioners who may be willing to share their personal commitment to the parish of resource, time, and abilities, and what that commitment has done for their relationship to God. These may be speakers (at whatever time/event) or letters (for publications), depending on the parish's preference.
- Events / Activities: Coordinate Parish Banquet, Ministry Fairs, Commitment Sunday, Ministry Commissioning, or any other event/activity which will be included in the campaign. This will involve anything from putting together the materials, facility scheduling, planning meals & catering, coordinating timing, etc.
- Phone Calls: To conduct a phone campaign as described in I Love My Parish Manual. Telling parishioners that they will soon be hearing about Stewardship and about the vision of the Parish. This job gathers phone lists, phone scripts, and gathers volunteers.
- Homilies: the pastor has this role, planning homilies which can be timed with the other events of the campaign.



“Off-Time” / Year-Round Jobs:

- Parish Welcoming / Community Building: Assessing how the parish cares for its parishioners’ sense of belonging to and comfort in its parish. Proposing strategies and events which foster the idea of the parish as a community, not a building.
- Publications: Assess how newsletters or bulletins are being used and propose/execute changes or improvements which may help spread a continuing message of commitment to Stewardship & Discipleship.
- Education in other Ministries: Are other ministries adding Stewardship teachings to their activities? What instruction, materials, training would help them do so?
- Commitment Management (Resources): Following up on fall pledges of money/resource. If cards were made up, possibly publishing a pledge reminder, or updating the parish on pledge totals received to date, etc.
- Commitment Management (Time, Abilities): Following up on fall pledges / signup to devote time and abilities. Working with pastor/ministry leaders to find opportunities for these committed parishioners. Keep these opportunities before the parishioners. (\*See Section 5b on possible Time & Abilities Subcommittee)
- Transparency/Accountability: Assessing the living of Stewardship in the Parish House. Meet with pastor, Finance Council & Parish Council to determine if all the information is available and transparent to maintain a trustworthy parish.

## Section 5. The Means for *I Love My Parish*

### 5a. The *I Love My Parish* Calendar

#### “Tell your Story”

Before getting into the calendar, remember that every aspect of the campaign and Stewardship process must stress that it is *our* parish that we love. Every parish has a story, and is headed in a direction. That should lead to two questions:

1. Does the Focus Group know that direction?
  - Have you talked about what vision the parish has? The Stewardship process is based on our care and attention to the mission of the parish.
2. Does your parish know that direction?
  - Show your parish’s story in your newsletters, through your banquet, ministry fair, etc. Remind the parishioners why they love their parish.
  - Telling your story will inspire the parish and invite an outpouring of giving.

#### Sample General Calendar

The attached calendar should serve as a template for creating a campaign calendar. The Focus Group should:

- Keep to the Calendar! Staying on top of the various tasks is very important.
- Schedule progress updates, to make sure the various pieces will be in place. These are different than “working meetings”, so need not be done in person. Perhaps a phone call would do to the designated point person.
- Be patient! Nothing ever goes exactly according to plan.

Keep in mind that the sample given here is a basic, general calendar, and is an **example**. Further, each member of the focus group will have many more task-specific calendars of their own.

## Campaign Example Calendar: Months # 1, 2

<b>August</b>						
Sun	Mon	Tu	Wed	Th	Fri	Sat
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31
<b>September</b>						
Sun	Mon	Tu	Wed	Th	Fri	Sat
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30					

### I Love My Parish Tasks:

- Determine Focus Group
- Assign Leadership Positions for:
  - Stewardship training
  - Budget Information
  - Ministry Catalog
  - Telephone Call Leader
  - “Love Letters”
  - Publications Point
  - Parish Banquet Coordinator
  - Hospitality Coordinator

### Schedule:

- Schedule Focus Group Orientation & Progress Meetings
- Schedule Task Leader workdays (eg. Publications, Telephone) for training
- Introduce Leaders to Parish on Sunday

## Campaign Example Calendar: Campaign Month!

October						
Sun	Mon	Tu	Wed	Th	Fri	Sat
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31		

### I Love My Parish Tasks:

- Weekly check-ins for progress updates
- Prepare material for formal commitments
- Assign Leadership positions for post-campaign focus group

### Schedule

October 1 – Mail Introductory Letter from pastor

October 2<sup>nd</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup> – Phone Calls #1 (Intro)

October 10<sup>th</sup> – Newsletter #1

October 13<sup>th</sup> – Stewardship-Theme Homily

October 18<sup>th</sup> – Phone Calls #2 (Banquet)

October 20<sup>th</sup> – Ministry Booths (Time & Abilities)

October 22<sup>nd</sup> –Newsletter #2

October 25<sup>th</sup> – Parish Celebration & Banquet

October 27<sup>th</sup> – Commitments turned in

October 31<sup>st</sup> – Thank you acknowledgements sent out / Phone Calls

## **Sample Narrative for Four-Weekend Campaign**

*I Love My Parish* requires a well-timed lead-up to commitment, helping educate parishioners on Stewardship giving and reminding them of why they love their parish.

### **Week/Weekend One**

A warm letter from the pastor will be mailed to every family in the parish. This letter will show the pastor's love for the parish and the people of the parish community. It should be a call to the parishioners to learn how to intensify their love of God through the stewardship of their parish.

The pastor's homily on the first Sunday of the process will give emphasis to the reasons why we should love our parish. It would be wise for the pastor to indicate his own personal feelings of love for the parish and the people of the parish.

A calendar that indicates the points of emphasis of the *I Love My Parish* process will be made available to the parish members. This can be included in the letter from the pastor or inserted in the weekly parish bulletin. It is good to include a special card or reminder of those specific areas for which the parish family should be praying.

All printed material will be on a letterhead format that uses the *I Love My Parish* logo and heading. This should continue throughout the duration of the process.

At each of the four Sundays in the *I Love My Parish* process, a lay person or a couple will present their personal love letter to the parish. This can be very moving and dynamic. The consultant will offer guidance in this area when needed and desired. The letter should not take more than two to five minutes to present. Writing it out in the form of a love letter will help ensure that the material is well organized and that sincere thought and prayer have gone into formulating the letter. Parishes with multiple masses should have a different presenter at each mass. This allows more individuals to be involved.

### **Weekend Two**

The second Sunday will emphasize those areas of ministry that characterize my love for the parish.

Include a special card or reminder of those specific areas for which the parish family should be praying.

Love letters presented on this Sunday may reflect the effectiveness of the ministries of the parish in the life of the presenter. This makes the parish relevant to the people and leads to positive identification with the parish on a personal basis.

### **Weekend Three**

A small card will be given to everyone in attendance at the different masses on this weekend. The card should be printed with the *I Love my Parish* logo. Each person taking a card is asked to write one or two sentences stating why they love their parish. (Pencils should be provided for those who do not have their own). Cards should be passed to the aisles and collected by ushers. Parishioners should be urged to sign their card although it is not necessary if they feel reluctant to do so.

A dynamic, informative newsletter will be written, printed and mailed during this week. Some of the quotes from the cards that were written by parishioners will add dynamic to the newsletter. If commitment cards are going to be used, they can be distributed at mass on the third Sunday and/or mailed out with the newsletter. It is good to do both.

Include a special card or reminder of those specific areas for which the parish family should be praying.

Weekend number three is the best weekend for the special event. This can be in the form of an *I Love My Parish* banquet. Or, some parishes will utilize the stewardship fair format. This involves setting up booths or tables that depict each of the major emphases: *time, abilities, & resources*. This approach involves more parishioners than the banquet approach and can have a positive impact.

**Weekend Four**

Parishioners will turn in commitment cards on this weekend. The pastor may wish to offer message of thanksgiving to God and sincere prayer for the coming year in the parish.

All of those registering a commitment will receive a thank you acknowledgment within one week.

If commitments were made to help in a particular ministry, those organizing those ministries will receive a notice of those expressing commitment and be asked to contact those parishioners.

**Another Sample Timeline:** No one activity is adequate for a successful process. However, many in tandem, based on the same spirit, will be an effective message.

<b>An I Love My Parish Campaign Timeline at a Glance</b>	<b>Before October 5</b>	<b>October 5 - 11</b>	<b>October 12 - 18</b>	<b>October 19 - 25</b>	<b>October 26 - 31</b>
<b>Letter From Pastor</b>	✓				
<b>"Love Letters" Presented</b>		✓	✓	✓	
<b>Prayer Commitment Card</b>		✓			
<b>Bulletin / Devotional</b>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<b>Special Newsletter</b>	✓		✓		
<b>Homily on Stewardship</b>					✓
<b>Homily References / Reminder</b>		✓	✓	✓	
<b>Phone Campaign</b>	✓		✓		✓
<b>Parish Banquet</b>				✓	
<b>Commitment Card Turn-In</b>					✓

## 5b. Samples, Suggestions, & Campaign Materials

Borrow & Steal anything from this section! These items are meant to avoid “re-inventing the wheel” of a successful campaign.

### I. Example: Time & Abilities List

Here is an example of a catalogued list of ministries in which parishioners are or can be involved, complete with a vision as to how various types of ministries are grounded in an understanding of stewardship.

Catalogs are useful for publications, commitment cards, and bulletins...anywhere to showcase the life of the parish.

#### Time & Abilities List for *I Love My Parish*

##### LITURGY

*We are a spiritual people. Whatever we do or accomplish comes from our faith and knowledge of God active in our lives. Absolutely everything we do hinges on the way we know of God active in our lives.*

- Lectors: proclaim readings at masses and other liturgical celebrations. You are "God's voice" when you proclaim His word.
- Eucharistic Ministers: assist the priest with the distribution of the Eucharist both at mass and by bringing the Blessed Sacrament to those who are unable to attend mass.
- Altar Servers: assist with the celebration of mass and other liturgical events. No upper age limit, however, must have received their first communion.
- Cantors: help lead the congregation in song during mass. No need to have a recording contract, just a healthy desire to praise God.
- Music: “When you sing, you pray twice,” says St. Augustine. Music is so important for us as Catholics. All musical instruments and singing abilities can be used for God's glory.
- Greeters: the church hopes that everyone who comes should be greeted by name at least three times before they reach their seats. Greeters are needed to help all feel welcome, meet visitors and set a climate of fraternity for all who walk through our doors.
- Ushers: help seat people, take up the collection, hand out materials if not located in pews, assist in the offertory procession and assist in other ways to help the smooth flow of the liturgy.
- Altar Society: dedicated volunteers who care for the altar linens, vestments, candles and altar vessels used for our liturgies.
- Nursery: assist with child-care during mass while parents worship at mass.

##### EDUCATION

*Learning God's immense place in our lives goes on until the day we die. Education, our knowledge of God, should likewise extend from the youngest to the most senior member of our parish.*

- CCD Supervisor: organizes the CCD program which includes materials, information on training, teachers,

substitutes and aides.

- CCD Teachers: instruct the children in their religious training.
- CCD Substitute Teachers/Aides: help the teachers during class or with the class if they are unable to attend a particular Sunday. Aides help the teachers with materials, organization, and the children during instruction time.
- RCIA: the process assists people in their journey into the Catholic Church. The process is both yearlong and parish-wide. Many people are needed to help those coming into the Church understand the beauty, wisdom, depth and history of our faith.
- Youth Group Mentors: our young people are not only the "future" of the Church, they ARE the Church. Adults are needed to help listen to their needs, guide them in faith, participate in community and Church service projects and so much more.
- Adult Education: includes, but is not limited to, Bible Study, faith sharing, Church history, prayer groups, days of recollection, and adult retreats

#### PARISH CARE

*Our parish, including the building, grounds and people, need on-going care not only to maintain what we have, but continue to grow in God's image.*

- Gardening Angels: these people care for the parish grounds: plant flowers, cut grass, trim and in all other ways allow the outside beauty that reflects the beauty inside.
- St. Joseph's Helpers: the building and grounds are like people, they need attention and repair on occasion. These people fix or repair the things that are broken or need updating and improvement. Skills needed include, but are not limited to knowledge of plumbing, electrical, HVAC, and all others building skills.
- Hospitality: people are needed to prepare a warm welcome for guests and socials by preparing food and refreshment. This is a vital element of our parish. It provides for our social gatherings and so much more. Dedicated volunteers are needed to both ensure its order and availability to meet our ongoing needs.
- Hall and Sanctuary Cleaners: volunteer teams are needed weekly to clean the Hall and Church. Mopping, dusting, window cleaning and more, are needed every week to provide a clean and inviting atmosphere.

#### SERVICE MINISTRIES

*"They will know we are Christians by our love." Our faith is always to take us out from ourselves to serve the needs of others. These ministries help put our faith in action. These are known as the "Corporal Works of Mercy".*

- Nursing Home Visits: in this service a person would help the pastor stay informed about parishioners in nearby nursing homes, making sure the pastor knows where and when he can visit and provide other assistance as needed.
- Hospital visits: All are always encouraged to visit those in the hospital. Here a person would help the pastor stay informed about parishioners in hospitals. Help gather information and provide other assistance as needed.
- Prison Ministry: Our Parish has additional Catholics in its boundaries located at the State Prison and County jail. Volunteers, once they have completed training, are needed to visit these prisons for Bible



Study, adult education, Mass and other devotions.

- Good Samaritan House: offers the opportunity to collect food, clothing, furniture, etc. for people in need.
- School Supplies for Needy Children: ongoing collection of pens, paper and other school supplies. Volunteers needed to contact schools for names of those who need some help.

#### SUPPORT MINISTRIES

*Available to all in times of crisis offering personal attention and prayer.*

- Bereavement/Funeral Support: at the time a death, these volunteers assist with pulling together food for the family of the deceased for that time between the death and the funeral. On the day of the funeral, if the family wishes, arranges for a supper held here at the church or where the family desires following the interment.
- Widowed/Divorced Group: a support group to help individuals maintain their strength, faith and spirituality in the Church.
- Telephone/Web-based Prayer Group: parishioners help the pastor organize daily spiritual messages, readings and opportunities for prayer requests. Also, helps disseminate information quickly on rapidly developing needs.

#### FUNDS/FUNDRAISERS

*Resources follow Spiritual energy. As we accomplish the above activities these fundraising events will take on a life of their own and more will happen. Volunteers are needed to help make these happen for the glory of God*

- Spring Rummage and Plant Sale
- Spring Raffle
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday Dinners
- Fall Bazaar
- Fall Raffle
- Youth Bake Sales

#### ADMINISTRATIVE NEEDS

*This and all parishes need people for the ongoing, nitty-gritty, basic functions to enable a parish to continue.*

- Secretary/Bookkeeper: volunteer needed to handle parish accounting system, pay bills and general correspondence.
- Bulletin preparation: needed to research, prepare and copy weekly and monthly parish bulletins and newsletters.
- Collection counter and depositor: needed to ensure the accurate accounting of parish collection.
- Parish Calendar: helps to track and record an overview of upcoming events. The goal is to always be planning at least twelve months into the future.
- Sale of Religious Articles: our Gift Shop helps people with religious sacramentals, books and other materials to assist their faith-journey.
- Parish Scrap-Book: provides a historical record of events and people in our parish.

## **II. I Love My Parish Materials**

The Following items are included for use (or as templates to be customized for your parish). They include templates (for handouts, materials for actually executing some activity) and more detailed descriptions of certain actions described in the *I Love My Parish* suggested campaign (Section 4).

In Order:

- Activity: “Love Letters to the Parish”
  - Includes template for “Love Notes”
- Sample of Activity: “Letter from Pastor”
- Activity: *I Love My Parish* Banquet
- Activities: Emphasizing Spiritual Dimension of Stewardship
  - Includes template for “Commitment to Pray” Card
  - Includes template for “Devotional Thoughts of the Week” Card publication
- Activity: *I Love My Parish* Telephone Campaign
- Activity: Leadership Roster for Focus Group
- Template for Commitment Card
- Miscellaneous *I Love My Parish* “Branding” materials. Includes Cover Pages (2) & Mailing label template.

*Any material or template may be obtained in digital form by emailing [pkane@dioceseoftyler.org](mailto:pkane@dioceseoftyler.org) or by calling at 903-534-1077, ext. 160.*



# I LOVE MY PARISH

## DIOCESE OF TYLER

### Love Letters about the Parish

Enlist individuals to share their "Love Letter" stating why they love their parish.

It would be good if each person would indicate what the parish means to them personally. They may want to include specific examples.

The "Love Letters" should take no longer than five minutes and should be shared at as many masses and other events as possible. They may also be included in Newsletters, bulletins, etc.

It will be good to include a cross section of parish members. This group could include:

- A long-time Member of the Parish
- A Child or Teenager
- Single Adults
- A new convert
- Someone in one of the ministries
- Couples
- Catholic Education Worker
- Representatives of each Ethnic group in parish

These "Love Letters" should emphasize the activities which the parish offers: ministries, opportunities for prayer/adoration, and community events—which strengthen the person telling their story. Good testimonials will answer, "Why do I love my parish?" and "What does good stewardship mean for me spiritually?"



[Name of Parish here]

Write a brief note about why you love your parish:

Signed (optional) \_\_\_\_\_



[Name of Parish here]

Write a brief note about why you love your parish:

Signed (optional) \_\_\_\_\_



[Name of Parish here]

Write a brief note about why you love your parish:

Signed (optional) \_\_\_\_\_



[Name of Parish here]

Write a brief note about why you love your parish:

Signed (optional) \_\_\_\_\_



# I LOVE MY PARISH

## DIOCESE OF TYLER

### A Sample Letter from the Pastor

Dear Parish Family,

This is truly a great time in the life of our parish. I have been thinking about all of the blessings that we have received as a parish and ask you to join with me in a prayer of thanksgiving.

As I ask you to pray about your discipleship and how we can commit ourselves better to the mission of the parish, I realize that it is my parish also. I have been thinking about why I love my parish.

- I love my parish because of its heritage; the establishment of this parish made a strong foundation on which to build. Thank you to all of those who worked together to make it happen.
- I love my parish because of the many of you who join with me in prayer as we seek to know God's will for our parish.
- I love my parish because of the many of you who make your stewardship of your time, your abilities and your resources a reality.
- I love my parish because of your willingness to share the vision of evangelization that our parish aspires to rather than being at ease with the *status quo*.
- I love my parish because of the opportunity that it affords me to live out my call to priestly ministry.

And, finally, I love my parish because of the confidence that I feel that each of you will join with me as we express our love for God and his work in our parish in the weeks to come.

Thank you in advance for a job well done.

Sincerely,



# I LOVE MY PARISH

## DIOCESE OF TYLER

### Special Event Parish Banquet or Stewardship & Ministries Fair

*An I Love My Parish Banquet\* should help to kickoff the commitment portion of the campaign.*

Every adult in the Parish Family should be invited and urged to attend the banquet. Childcare should be organized to care for the younger children during the banquet. The banquet should be a stellar event. It doesn't have to be expensive, but it ought to be well done.

The committee will need to work with the pastor and the stewardship committee in determining a place for the banquet, a suitable date and time and a menu for the meal. The meal should be served as a part of the expense of the I Love My Parish process.

A hostess and a host will be designated for each table. They will assist in making those who attend feel relaxed and welcome.

A liturgy—Holy Mass, evening prayer, benediction, a procession—or devotional would be a wonderful way to begin the event.

A dynamic program should be planned by the pastor and the committee. This could include presentations, speakers, slideshows—not solicitations. This is a chance both to remind parishioners of the continuity of the Church and its action in the local parish, and see the extension of its mission into the future. To do this, you may showcase 1) the history of the parish, distant and recent 2) the missions or ministries of the parish 3) families of the parish 4) visions for the future in terms of liturgy/worship, faith formation, outreach & evangelization. Take care that this does not become a “pitch”, but remains a vision for the future without financial or capital targets attached.

Commitments will not be received at the banquet, but the groundwork will be laid out for the important commitment phase that will follow the banquet. That groundwork will be to remind parishioners of the evangelizing mission of the Church and the fact of its playing out at the parish level. In this way, the parish is worthy of their engagement as a disciple.

*\*The parish may elect to instead have a Stewardship & Ministries Fair. This is usually done by setting up booths that are designed to give a visual presentation of the ministries of the parish and how they are supported through the Stewardship of time, abilities, and resources. This can be exciting and effective since it involves so many parishioners in making it happen.*



# I LOVE MY PARISH

## DIOCESE OF TYLER

### Activities for Spiritual Emphasis

The purpose for a stewardship-strengthening process in a parish is to develop disciples. Stewardship is the act of being a steward. It is the people—the stewards—that count, the giver that counts and not the gift.

Stewardship is not fundraising. It is the way of the disciple, giving God his/her time, abilities and resources. The most precious gift of time we can give is time in conversation with God. It is not a one-time effort, but a lifetime effort. In order to introduce Stewardship to the parishioners, try using the following activities:

1. The pastor must take the leadership role in developing a rich spiritual foundation for the I Love My Parish process in his parish.
2. A Spiritual Emphasis committee could be formed to work with the pastor in this most important aspect of the I Love My Parish process.
3. A special prayer should be crafted for the parish to use during the process.
4. A “Commitment to Pray Card” should be distributed on the first Sunday of the campaign. This card should be signed and dated. The card should be taken home and put it in a prominent place so that it will serve as a reminder to pray for the parish. These cards should be given to everyone in attendance at Mass rather than just one to each family. Prayer is both an individual and a family matter. Even children can learn to pray for their parish.
5. If possible, it is good to distribute I Love My Parish magnets with the Commitment to Pray card. This makes it easy to attach the reminder card to the refrigerator in the home.
6. The weekly devotional cards can be passed out each week at Mass or they can be mailed to the homes of the parishioners. Mailing is better if possible.
7. The special Parish Prayer should be prayed at each mass or event during the campaign phase of the process.
8. The pastor should prepare and deliver homilies that encourage stewardship as Discipleship.
9. Those who participate in Perpetual Adoration can be encouraged to pray for their parish, the parish leadership and the parish ministries. If there isn’t regular adoration, or it isn’t perpetual, this process may be a good time to put new energy into those efforts.



### I Will Pray for My Parish

Because of my baptism I am a disciple of Christ, a member of His body, the Church, I hereby commit to pray for my parish.

I will pray each day for my parish. I will pray for my pastor and I will pray for our parish family.

We will pray together as a family at least one time each week.

Sign \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Put this card in a prominent place to remind you to pray.



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We will pray together as a family at least one time each week.

Sign \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Put this card in a prominent place to remind you to pray.





Devotional  
for the Week of  
October 13<sup>th</sup>

Prayer Intentions

- *Renewed Hearts for the people of the parish*
- *Strength to respond to the New Evangelization*
- *Greater Love for the Eucharist*
- *That God send the resources for our parish*

“Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you.” Mateo 7:7

Passage for the week

“Therefore, I bear with everything for the sake of those who are chosen, so that they too may obtain the salvation that is in Christ Jesus, together with eternal glory. This saying is trustworthy: If we have died with him we shall also live with him; if we persevere we shall also reign with him. But if we deny him he will deny us. If we are unfaithful he remains faithful, for he cannot deny himself.”

2 Timothy 2: 10-13

I Love My Parish Prayer

*Put Parish Stewardship Prayer Here*



# I LOVE MY PARISH

## DIOCESE OF TYLER

### Telephone Committee

The Telephone Committee should include one telephone caller for every \_\_\_\_ families in the parish. These callers will make three phone calls to every home in the parish. A script and a training session will be provided for each call.

The calls will be as follows:

1. The first call will be a simple informational call to inform the church families that the I Love My Parish process has begun and to remind them to be watching for information through the mail, etc.
2. The second call will be to support the attendance at the I Love My Parish special event (Banquet, Fair, etc). The purpose of this call will be personal invitation to join in this important event.
3. The third call will be for the purpose of reminding the members of the church to submit their I Love My Parish response commitment cards.

Notes:

- Callers need to be positive about their parish.
- Smile when you call—it shows in your voice.
- It is good to stick with the script.
- Callers will not be asked to solicit gift estimates over the telephone.
- The diocese can help prepare a script for parishes.



# I LOVE MY PARISH

## DIOCESE OF TYLER

### Example of Leadership Roster

#### **Spiritual Emphasis Committee (Devotionals, Prayer Theme)**

Chairperson \_\_\_\_\_

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

#### **Telephone/Invitation Committee**

Chairperson \_\_\_\_\_

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

Co-Chairperson \_\_\_\_\_

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

#### **Parishioner Testimonials (Pastor's Letter, Parishioner Love Letters, Lay Talks)**

Chairperson \_\_\_\_\_

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

Co-Chairperson \_\_\_\_\_

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

#### ***I Love My Parish* Banquet/Festival**

Chairperson \_\_\_\_\_

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

Co-Chairperson \_\_\_\_\_

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

#### **Publicity & Promotion (Signs, Bulletins, Messages, Forms)**

Chairperson \_\_\_\_\_

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

Co-Chairperson \_\_\_\_\_

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



[NAME OF PARISH HERE]

Commitment Card

I/we desire to express our stewardship of the parish by committing to give: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

per Week \_\_\_\_\_ Month \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_



[NAME OF PARISH HERE]

Commitment Card

I/we desire to express our stewardship of the parish by committing to give: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

per Week \_\_\_\_\_ Month \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_



[NAME OF PARISH HERE]

Commitment Card

I/we desire to express our stewardship of the parish by committing to give: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

per Week \_\_\_\_\_ Month \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_



[NAME OF PARISH HERE]

Commitment Card

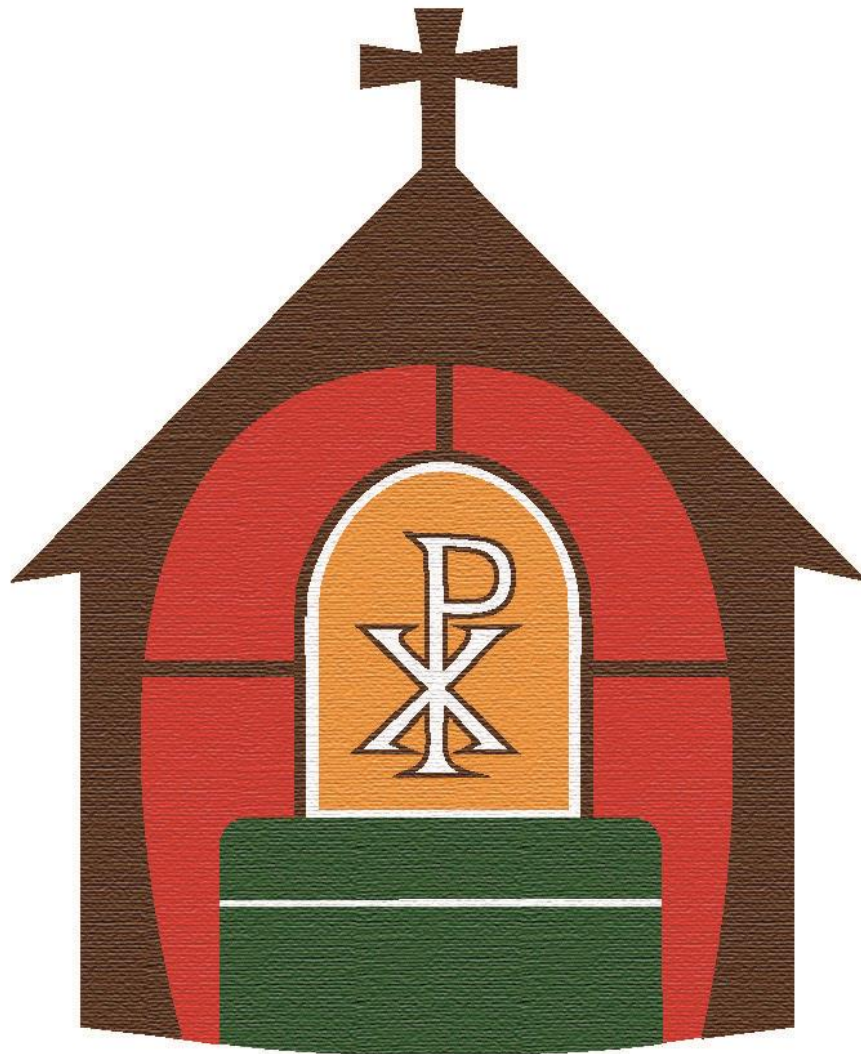
I/we desire to express our stewardship of the parish by committing to give: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

per Week \_\_\_\_\_ Month \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

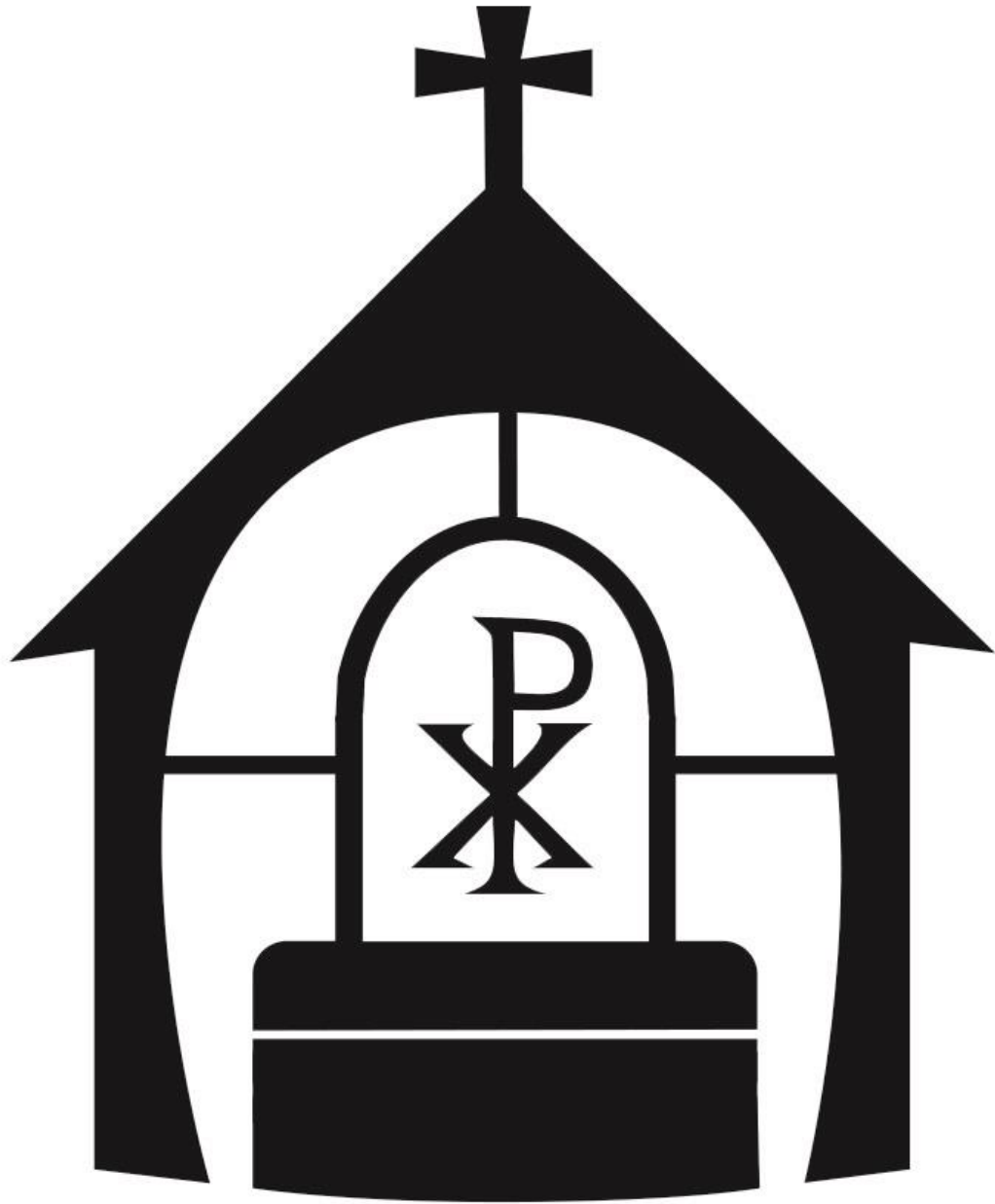
Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_



*I LOVE MY PARISH*

Building the Kingdom of God

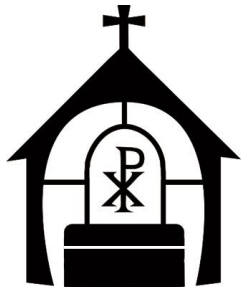


*I LOVE MY PARISH*

**Logos for Mailers, letterhead, other variations:** *Customizable to add Parish Name, logo. Please contact Peter Kane at the Diocese for this feature.*



**I LOVE MY PARISH**  
DIOCESE OF TYLER



**I LOVE MY PARISH**  
<NAME OF PARISH>



**I LOVE MY PARISH**  
<NAME OF PARISH>

## 5c. More Help, Vendor Suggestions

**\*\*AN EASY way to find something you need is to first ask Peter Kane at the Diocese ([pkane@dioceseoftyler.org](mailto:pkane@dioceseoftyler.org) or 903 534 1077). The Diocese can find samples for homilies, “love letters” or lay testimonials, letters, action plans, devotionals, themes, etc. specific to your needs.**

### Vendors

All parishes, as good stewards of their own treasure, must be wise about how they spend money. HOWEVER, good tools are necessary for any fruitful work. Several relatively inexpensive tools from Catholic vendors and secular vendors are out there to help your Parish succeed. Consider also that money wisely spent will reap an increased return.

### **General Stewardship Guides/Advice/Study**

- *Stewardship: A Disciple’s Response 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary*: includes in appendices suggestions for implementing Stewardship at the parish level. This can be found at [usccbpublishing.org](http://usccbpublishing.org). **FIND IN SPANISH under “Corresponsabilidad: Respuesta de Discipulos”.**
- See [catholicstewardship.com](http://catholicstewardship.com) for *Stewardship: Disciples Respond, a Practical Guide for Pastoral Leaders* and hundreds of resources & publications compiled by the International Catholic Stewardship Council. They also list other vendors (partners from whom to obtain other materials/services).

### **Our Sunday Visitor Offerings**

(contact Julie Kenny – 800-348-2886, ext. 2543 or at [jkenny@osv.com](mailto:jkenny@osv.com); can also go to [osvoffertory.com](http://osvoffertory.com))

#### **1. Offertory- Stewardship of Resources**

Using frequently sent envelopes or credit card processing facilitates the giving of resource for your parishioners. Have you considered how envelopes can be used to remind and encourage giving? Have you considered allowing your parishioners to sign up for automatic credit card donations?

The following promotional brochures are available from Our Sunday Visitor:

- Solution brochure on our Increased Offertory/Stewardship of Treasure program.
- Solution brochure on our online giving program and communication package.
- Solution brochure for several offertory solutions available from OSV

#### **2. Communications – Solutions for Telling Your Story**

People give to people. Does your Parish present itself well? Have you reassessed your publications and their effectiveness? Are they attractive, have relevant/fresh material? Do they tell stories? Or do they only give information? What does your website look like? What is your website *for*? Information? Evangelization? Encouragement? Outreach?

### Books / Written Resources

- *Making Stewardship a Way of Life* by Fr. Kemberling, Mila Glodava. A look at the process and materials from a parish famous for its implementation of stewardship in the parish. They are a very large parish in a different area of the country, so take the things that fit for your parish.



- *Best Practices in Parish Stewardship* by Dr. Zech: A statistical study and related recommendations on what works best in Stewardship parishes.
  - *Stewardship by the Book: **Bulletin** Bits based on the Sunday Readings*. Sharon Hueckel Good for adding to your devotionals. (AVAILABLE FROM DIOCESE FOR FREE)
  - **Pamphlets** for distribution (call, visit online OSV for catalog): Good examples are “What Catholics Believe About Stewardship” (in Spanish too), “A Call to Serve” (in Spanish too), “Six Ways I can Make my Parish Better”, and many more.
3. There are promotional materials & items for purchase from Our Sunday Visitor regarding Communication Solutions:
- *Grace in Action* (Sample), a monthly stewardship **newsletter** produced by OSV.
  - Faith in Action **website** offering for parishes that is regularly updated from OSV (Product brief).
  - “A Steward Reflects...” letter, bi-lingual (Sample). OSV has several of these educational offering envelope **inserts** addressing Catholic prayers, seasons, etc.
  - **Booklet** – Catholic Stewardship: Sharing God’s Gifts by Colleen Smith
  - State of the Parish **report** (Sample). OSV has a template available for parishes to send information and they will print and send this report celebrating all gifts received in the parish throughout the year.

#### Other Vendors

- Parish Publishing: <http://www.parishpublishing.org/index.html> offers multitude of materials for communications and running programs.
- Credit Card / Online Giving: **Acceptiva** [www.acceptiva.com](http://www.acceptiva.com), **ChurchDB** [www.churchdb.com](http://www.churchdb.com), **Faith Direct** [www.faithdirect.net](http://www.faithdirect.net), **Parish Pay** [www.parishpay.com](http://www.parishpay.com), **PledgeConnect** [www.pledgeconnect.com](http://www.pledgeconnect.com), **Vanco** [www.vancoservices.com](http://www.vancoservices.com)
- Websites: *Solutio* [solutiosoftware.com](http://solutiosoftware.com), Liturgical Publications Inc., [eCatholicwebsites.com](http://eCatholicwebsites.com)
- Stewardship Consultants
  - Cathedral Corporation: [www.cathedralcorporation.com](http://www.cathedralcorporation.com)
  - Institute of School & Parish Development: [www.ispd.com](http://www.ispd.com)
  - Our Sunday Visitor: [www.osvenvelopes.com](http://www.osvenvelopes.com)

#### Other Examples:

- **Best Resource** International Catholic Stewardship Council: Parish Resources to be found at <http://catholicstewardship.com/parish-resources> giving examples from countless other dioceses and parishes.