

# SAID ED February 23, 2014

## God's Ways are not Our Ways

Last year in January, we ran a very successful Stewardship Ministry Faire in our Great Hall after all the Masses. It was our hope that people would see some of the many ways we serve others. We wanted to give folks a chance to offer their gifts too. The results were outstanding and many people, young and old, came forward to offer their service. Many of the ministries present that weekend received fresh recruits – people offering their Stewardship of Time and Talent. Last year's energy was focused on increasing the number of stewards in our various ministries. We were delighted with this Stewardship Renewal Program; the many hours of preparation were well worth the effort.

It's been over a year since we have spoken about Stewardship in a formal way. It is time now to focus on the third component of Stewardship – Treasure. You have probably noticed that each week our weekly revenue falls short of our budgeted collection requirement. It's not much when measured against our 1.4 million annual budget, but it does add up. Despite our generous Christmas collection, we are still about \$13,500 short of our expected income. This week will begin our Annual Stewardship Renewal Program. This year we need to emphasize the "Treasure" aspect of Stewardship.

Now having said all the above, let me say that Stewardship is not about "increased giving" or getting more "volunteers." Stewardship is about acknowledging God as the ultimate source of all we have. Good Stewardship invites us to return a portion of our resources to God in gratitude for our many blessings.

Stewardship asks that we take our baptismal call seriously. In Baptism we were washed clean of Original Sin, made members of the church, the family of God, sisters and brothers of Christ. In Baptism we are celebrated as members of the Household of God – members of the same family in Christ. As family members we belong to each other and have responsibilities to each other just as every blood family has. One of those responsibilities is to share our resources and give to each other out of gratitude and love. Good Stewardship is what we are all about. We are not looking for "volunteers" or "increased giving," we are looking for "good stewards."

This week you will be receiving a letter asking for a renewal of your Stewardship Pledge. See this request as part of your spiritual journey. How much do you trust in the Lord to provide what you truly need? How much are you returning to the Lord in gratitude for the ways you have been blessed. The Scripture ask us to return 10% of your resources to God in gratitude. We suggest giving 5% to our parish and the other 5% to Charities of your choice. How close are you to doing this?

Stewardship is a great blessing. Are you receiving the challenge? Please give it some serious thought and be prepared to make your commitment before Lent begins.

Have a great week!

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