



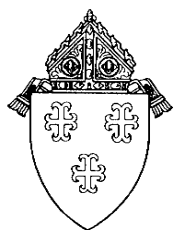
TIME · TALENT · TREASURE

A

GUIDE

FOR A STEWARDSHIP

IMPLEMENTATION ACTION PLAN



PREPARED BY:

THE OFFICE OF STEWARDSHIP & DEVELOPMENT
DIOCESE OF PROVIDENCE, RHODE ISLAND

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Please note: There is no perfect plan for implementing stewardship as a way of life in your parish. The six week action plan detailed within the following pages should be used as a guide and may have to be modified based upon the unique nature of your particular parish community.

As a way of introducing the concept of stewardship to the parish community, the pastor is encouraged to send a letter to all parishioners with an enclosed stewardship informational brochure. This brochure, also available in Spanish, is provided to parishes free of charge and briefly focuses on stewardship of time, talent and treasure. In his letter, the pastor briefly defines what it means to be a Christian steward and invites parishioners to read the brochure. The pastor also indicates in his letter that the parishioner will be hearing more about stewardship within the coming weeks. *Please refer to Exhibit A below.*

Exhibit A: Sample Pastor Introductory Letter to Parishioners

Saint Mary Parish
123 Main Street
Anytown, RI

Date

Name

Address

City, State, Zip

Dear (Parishioner):

As Christian stewards, we recognize that our time, talent and treasure are gifts from God to be used to serve God directly, and to serve God through each other. The Gospel tells us that, as stewards of these gifts, we will eventually be called on to render an account of the appropriate use of our gifts during our lives.

Our parish is a stewardship parish. Our theme this year is **“God Owns It All, We are Called to Share.”** We rejoice in the individual gifts each of us has been given, and we share them with one another in love and service. Through your generosity our parish provides liturgy, sacraments, religious education and assistance to people in need. To provide these services and programs, we depend on the generosity of time, talent and treasure of each of our parishioners. That is why I am asking you to increase your stewardship pledge to our parish in two ways: a pledge of your time and talent and a pledge of your treasure.

The enclosed stewardship brochure (stewardship brochure and commitment card) is an invitation to explore the spiritual principles of **Stewardship, A way of Life** more fully. Please take a few moments to read and prayerfully reflect on the contents. We look for every member of our parish to take the commitment to Christian stewardship seriously. During the next few weeks you will be hearing more about stewardship and how our parish exercises stewardship over your shared gifts.

Please complete the enclosed brochure (brochure and commitment card) and bring it with you to church next weekend. Thank you for responding to the call to be a good steward. May God bless all of our efforts.

Yours in Christ,

(Pastor)

Included with the pastor’s introductory letter is an informational stewardship brochure. Along with inspirational Bible quotations, this brochure also includes a letter from Bishop Thomas J. Tobin. In his letter, Bishop Tobin refers to the Pastoral Letter on stewardship entitled, “Stewardship: A Disciple’s Response.” He quotes the bishops of the United States who write, “Disciples who practice stewardship recognize God as the origin of life, the giver of freedom, the source of all they have and are and will be.” This brochure is provided free of charge from the Office of Stewardship & Development. *Please refer to Exhibit B below.*

Exhibit B: Our Parish Journey Stewardship Brochure

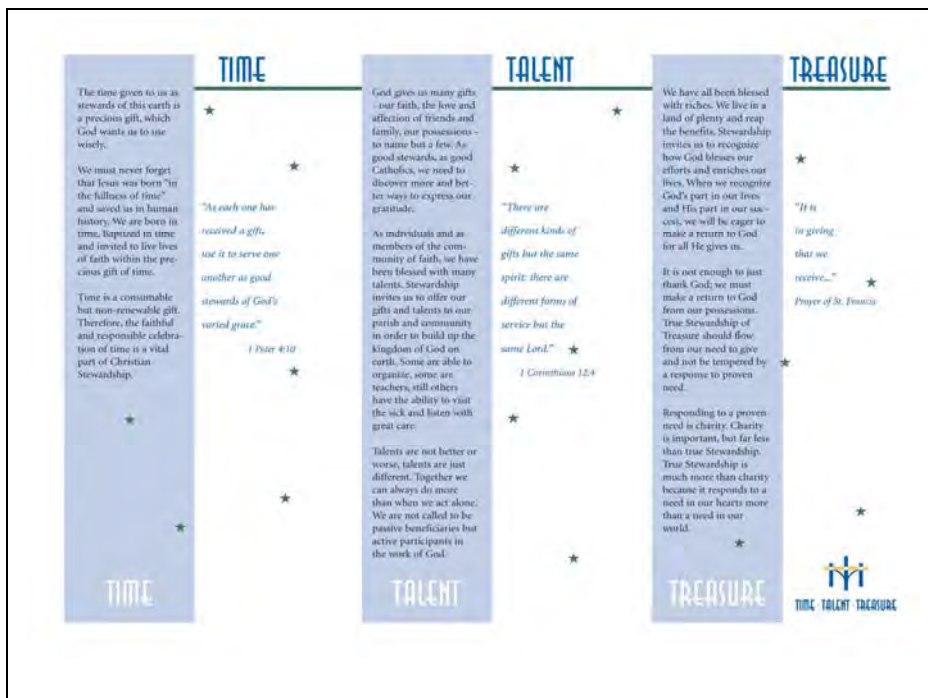
Bishop’s Letter

Back Cover

Front Cover



Inside Text



It is recommended that weekly bulletin announcements, pulpit announcements and Prayers of the Faithful be utilized in order to educate and promote the practice of good stewardship within your parish community. *Please refer to Exhibit C, D and E below.*

Exhibit C: Sample Bulletin Announcements for Week 2

- ✚ Christian stewardship provides a spirituality that you can take home from church, exercise at work and express through personal involvement in the community and church.
- ✚ Stewardship is not job-oriented or project minded. It is a way of life for a lifetime.
- ✚ Christian stewardship trains us to become aware that God is the ultimate giver of gifts we have. To give to God should be “from the top” – not what may be left over.

Exhibit D: Sample Pulpit Announcements for Week 2

Every one of us is talented in some way. Stewardship encourages us to use any talent we have to benefit an individual, the Church or the community. Last week you received a letter and enclosed stewardship informational brochure from our pastor designed to help you reflect on God’s generosity in your life in light of Christian discipleship. Please take a few moments to read this material carefully and reflect prayerfully upon God’s many gifts to you.

Exhibit E: Sample Prayers of the Faithful for Week 2

- ✚ For all parishioners, that our stewardship of time, talent and treasure will be expressions of gratitude for what God has given to us...We pray to the Lord.
- ✚ That we may respond generously as faithful stewards of the gifts entrusted to us...We pray to the Lord.
- ✚ That all ministries supported by our parish may bring people to a deeper faith in God... We pray to the Lord.

A “Stewardship Parish,” your parish is warm and hospitable with parishioners who recognize and share their many gifts and talents. Active and involved in the life of their parish, your parishioners are consciously grateful and committed to be prayerful disciples of Jesus Christ. In order to promote stewardship as “A Way of Life” in your parish community, the Office of Stewardship & Development is pleased to provide you with this “Our Parish Journey Stewardship Poster” free of charge. We suggest displaying this poster in appropriate locations in the church and parish center. *Please refer to Exhibit F below.*

Exhibit F: Our Parish Journey Stewardship Poster



Directed homilies are critical for a successful stewardship implementation process. Pastors are encouraged to incorporate comments about stewardship into Sunday homilies as you approach your parish's Stewardship Weekend. *Please refer to Exhibit G below which serves only as an example.*

Exhibit G: Sample Stewardship Homily

Today, we are embarking on our parish's stewardship journey of faith. It is an important and significant event in our life. It is one that will change the lives of each of us and will change the life of our parish.

The initial part of this process takes place during a six week time period. However, it is a process which is part of our faith and continues to grow throughout our lives. During this time you will learn of a way to fully embrace and respond to the teachings of Jesus Christ – because that's what stewardship is all about. You will be asked to evaluate how Christ is reflected in your lifestyle. Over the course of this process, you will be asked to make a commitment of your prayers, time, talent and treasure.

Over the course of this process, you will hear from some of our parishioners about stewardship and how it affects their lives. The simple act of these folks standing before our parish and sharing with us how stewardship affects their lives is in itself an act of stewardship.

We greatly appreciate their willingness to come forward to explain stewardship because the Church must do a better job in teaching this important concept. This is one of the reasons why you received a mailing this week and will be receiving more over the next few weeks. Please read the letters (and enclosed brochure) when they arrive at your home.

Stewardship is based on the spiritual principles of the Old Testament and the teachings of Christ. Stewardship is a way of life. It is a way of thanking God for all His blessings by returning a portion of the time, talent and treasure allotted to us.

We are asking all of you to spend the next few weeks praying and reflecting about stewardship and how it can affect our lives. For individuals it means thinking about the commitments we make. For families it means having a discussion with family members about the family's total stewardship commitment. In either case, we are asked to look at stewardship as the joyful return to God of the first fruits of what He has bestowed upon us.

In stewardship of time and talent, we are called on to give of ourselves and our time to the Church and to our community – including our prayers. In stewardship of treasure, we give back to God by giving of our financial resources to our Church, to the diocese and to charitable organizations in this community. We look to Jesus for help in understanding what stewardship is and what it means. Jesus points out that we reveal our values by our actions just as a tree reveals what kind of tree it is by the kind of fruit it bears.

Over the next few weeks, I ask that you read the letters we are sending you and to listen carefully to what your fellow parishioners have to say about their commitments from the pulpit. Then, I hope you will give prayerful consideration to your personal commitment of your time, talent and treasure.

May God bless our efforts.

It is recommended that bulletin announcements, pulpit announcements and Prayers of the Faithful be utilized in order to educate and promote the practice of good stewardship within your parish community. *Please refer to Exhibit H, I and J below.*

Exhibit H: Sample Bulletin Announcements for Week 3

- ✚ “No servant can serve two masters. Either he will hate the one and love the other or be attentive to the one and despise the other.” (Luke 16:13)
- ✚ Stewardship is an important concept for our spiritual growth as Catholics. It is a way of thanking God for all His blessings by returning to Him a portion of the time, talent and treasure we have received.
- ✚ Giving of our time involves being with God in prayer and worship and volunteering our time in the Church and community activities that help others.

Exhibit I: Sample Pulpit Announcements for Week 3

Our parish’s Stewardship Weekend will be held the weekends of _____ and _____. We will be asked to look at how richly God has blessed us, and determine whether or not we are giving back to Him in proportion to what He has given us. Let us reflect upon how sharing our God-given gifts will bring the light of Christ to those around us. We pray that everyone in our parish will recognize, develop and use all God’s gifts.

Exhibit J: Sample Prayers of the Faithful for Week 3

- ✚ That God, will help us to resolve to put Him first in our lives and to recognize that He has blessed us with all that we have and all that we are...Let us pray to the Lord.
- ✚ That Jesus will help us to humbly accept the challenge to share from our substance rather than from our surplus...Let us pray to the Lord.
- ✚ That Jesus, the perfect steward, will show us that complete trust in Him is necessary if we are to lead the life of true discipleship, and that giving of self is an important part of following Him...Let us pray to the Lord.

One of the most effective means of presenting the stewardship message is through the stewardship lay witness presentation. This talk is usually given after the homily by people who are already practicing stewardship in their own lives. It may be given by an individual or a couple. The purpose of the talk is to inspire people to become good stewards of the gifts entrusted to them and to also share real life examples of how stewardship is lived. *Please refer to Exhibit K below.*

Exhibit K: Sample Lay Witness Presentation

How do we do it? Will we like it? Does it hurt? Will it work for us? Why should we do it? These are many of the questions that passed through my mind as we first considered stewardship as a way of life. As I look back at my own decision on stewardship and its maturation in the last five years, I notice that my ideals have changed some. There were lots of reasons that I felt we should begin stewardship in our family. God has been very good to us. We have two healthy and happy children.

We have finally passed through the first struggling years of marriage and now had time to think about other things. As I began to think about the Church and what it meant to me, I realized that if everyone was making the kind of limited volunteer and financial commitment that I was, then the Church would not be here for my children. There was no other way it could continue unless there was a higher level of support from me and other parishioners.

Besides, I had great expectations of the Church. It should be well equipped to teach my children all the wonders of God. It should be able to care for the sick, feed the needy and care for the elderly. If my expectations were right, then I had to do my part to make them a reality. I was already giving some time to the Church and with that time some of my talents. But there had to be a strong commitment of time and a commitment of treasure if the Church was going to be able to do all the things I wanted it to do.

Once I decided that perhaps stewardship was something our family needed to think about, I was rather hesitant to bring it up for family discussion. However, I found that there weren't any problems, and everyone had ideas and thoughts. Since we made our decision on stewardship, I think our outlook on lots of things has changed. We have become more supportive of various worthwhile needs and organizations in the community. I think it opened an avenue of thought that allows us to give without always questioning what we will get in return.

I came to embrace stewardship through the Church, but I have grown in stewardship to include the entire community. I feel that God expects us to minister to all people. My gifts that fulfill my stewardship may be given to anyone who needs it. It is the giving and the support of God's children that is important. The spiritual rewards, the feeling of accomplishment that you are following God's way are the most important things that you will reap from stewardship. You will know you are succeeding when the spirituality and feelings of stewardship far surpass the questions of how much you share and sacrifice.

In addition to the bulletin announcements, pulpit announcements and Prayers of the Faithful, you may want to consider utilizing a bulletin insert to promote your parish's upcoming Stewardship Weekend. This promotional announcement should be inserted into the parish bulletin one week prior to your parish's Ministry Fair. *Please refer to Exhibit L below.*

Exhibit L: Sample Bulletin Insert

R. S. V. P.

Requesting Stewards for a Vibrant Parish

You are cordially invited

to attend our parish's

Ministry Fair

and

Stewardship Commitment Weekend.



- **Door Prizes**
- **Refreshments**
- **Kid's Corner**

Come learn about the ministry opportunities at Saint Mary Parish and talk to parishioners already involved.

It is recommended that bulletin announcements, pulpit announcements and Prayers of the Faithful be utilized in order to educate and promote the practice of good stewardship within your parish community. *Please refer to Exhibit M, N and O below.*

Exhibit M: Sample Bulletin Announcements for Week 4

- ✚ Sharing our talents arises from the fact that God has given each of us the ability and gifts to do certain things well, and we are to develop those talents for the good of others.
- ✚ “Moreover, it is required in stewards, that a person be found faithful to his gifts” (I Corinthians 4: 1-2)
- ✚ As we practice stewardship, we find that we grow spiritually and that our faith is deepened.

Exhibit N: Sample Pulpit Announcements for Week 4

Please reflect upon the witness presentation you have heard today. We thank _____ and _____ for sharing his/her story with us. We ask that you prayerfully evaluate the sharing of your time and talent to the parish and the community. Also, please take some time to read the insert in today’s bulletin about next week’s Stewardship Weekend. Please join us next weekend at our Ministry Fair (Commitment Sunday), a celebration of our parish community.

Exhibit O: Sample Prayers of the Faithful for Week 4

- ✚ That we may all acknowledge the Lord God as the source of every good gift in the vast array of our universe and the mystery of each human life...Let us pray to the Lord.
- ✚ That we will realize that stewardship begins with the personal need of each of us to return to God a portion of our time, talent and treasure in thanksgiving for all blessings given to us...Let us pray to the Lord.
- ✚ That as good stewards, we will open our hearts, schedules and hands to others...Let us pray to the Lord.

Planning Your Ministry Fair or Commitment Weekend

Purpose:

A time and talent Ministry Fair is held to generate awareness, enthusiasm and involvement among parishioners, ultimately increasing participation within parish ministries. It is an annual celebration of the work of the Church, and a special event that recognizes the importance of those coming forth to share their gifts of time and talent.

Timing:

Choosing the time of year is critical when planning for your time and talent Ministry Fair. A parish stewardship effort is best conducted in the spring months of April or May or in the fall months of September, October and November.

Theme:

Be sure to select a theme for your Ministry Fair. Some examples of possible themes include Come Follow Me, Christ Be Our Light, Serve One Another and Gifted By God.

Creative Ideas:

When planning and organizing your parish's Ministry Fair, consider having a contest for the best and most creative ministry display. Consider having a drawing for a prize awarded to those parishioners who visit each ministry booth/table. Have a section of the Ministry Fair for especially for children who would like to color religious scenes with crayons or for those young boys and girls who would like their face painted.

Describe Each Ministry Opportunity:

Provide a brief description of each time and talent opportunity at the parish. This will enable parishioners to discern whether their individual gifts and talents will be a good fit within a particular parish ministry.

Provide a Guest Book:

A guest book will serve to provide contact information for those parishioners who are interested in becoming involved within a particular parish ministry or for those who wish to learn more about that ministry.

Contact Ministry Leaders:

It is very important that the Stewardship Committee contact those who commit their time and talent. If people are not contacted and instead just have their names stored in a computer, then they will not get involved in the parish's stewardship effort in future years.

Promote the Fair:

It is suggested that bulletin and pulpit announcements, homilies, Prayers of the Faithful, banners and flyers be utilized around the church, school and parish center. Have a photographer take pictures of the parish celebration to peak the interest of those who were unable to attend.

Serve Refreshments:

This is very important. We all want our parishes to be more lively. So here's some food for thought. People go where they are fed. Stewardship can help feed your people!

It is recommended that bulletin announcements, pulpit announcements and Prayers of the Faithful be utilized in order to educate and promote the practice of good stewardship within your parish community. *Please refer to Exhibit P, Q and R below.*

Exhibit P: Sample Bulletin Announcements for Week 5

- ✚ Let us take a moment to consider all the blessings we receive from God and how we in turn thank God for His blessings.
- ✚ Stewardship of our time and talent and treasure is not limited only to the Church. Many people give time and money to other groups in the community as well.
- ✚ “Be generous, sharing what you have.” (I Timothy 6:18)

Exhibit Q: Sample Pulpit Announcements for Week 5

Today is our parish’s Stewardship Weekend. Please take some time after Mass to visit our parish center. Each of our parish ministries will be spotlighted with representatives available to answer any questions you may have. What a great opportunity for you to see how your can share your gifts of time and talent.

or

Today is our parish’s Stewardship Commitment Weekend. We ask that all parishioners complete and return their Commitment Card (in the collection basket this week, in the collection basket next week, or in a procession to the altar). Giving back a portion of our gifts and blessings to God’s community feels good.

Exhibit R: Sample Prayers of the Faithful for Week 5

- ✚ That as good stewards of God’s many gifts, we will remember the most important work of our lives is to be a Disciple of Jesus...We pray to the Lord.
- ✚ For all of us that we will use our gifts in love and service as a powerful way to express our gratitude to God for His many blessings...We pray to the Lord.
- ✚ That all of us may learn to give faithfully and graciously without always expecting something in return...We pray to the Lord.

As an alternative to organizing and planning an annual Ministry Fair, your parish may opt to utilize a Stewardship of Time and Talent Commitment Card. This commitment card can be completed by parishioners at Mass on your Stewardship Commitment Weekend. The Office of Stewardship & Development will be pleased to provide your parish with a Time and Talent Commitment Card free of charge (a treasure commitment card is also available). Your parish's Stewardship Committee may prefer to design their own commitment card for parishioners. *Please refer to Exhibit S below.*

Exhibit S: Sample Stewardship of Time and Talent Commitment Card

COMMITMENT CARD

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone (day): _____ (evening): _____

Other family members who may be interested:

SHARING OUR TIME & TALENT

I can help in the following areas. Please contact me.

<input type="checkbox"/> Lector	<input type="checkbox"/> Church Cleaner
<input type="checkbox"/> Eucharistic Minister	<input type="checkbox"/> Maintenance
<input type="checkbox"/> Music	<input type="checkbox"/> Carpentry
<input type="checkbox"/> Usher	<input type="checkbox"/> Painting
<input type="checkbox"/> Mass Server	<input type="checkbox"/> Sewing
<input type="checkbox"/> Bible School Teacher	<input type="checkbox"/> General Office Work
<input type="checkbox"/> CCD Teacher	<input type="checkbox"/> Bookkeeper
<input type="checkbox"/> Visitation - Elderly & Sick	<input type="checkbox"/> Typing
<input type="checkbox"/> Social Activities	<input type="checkbox"/> Telephone
<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation	<input type="checkbox"/> Other _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Church Laundry	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Lawn Care	_____

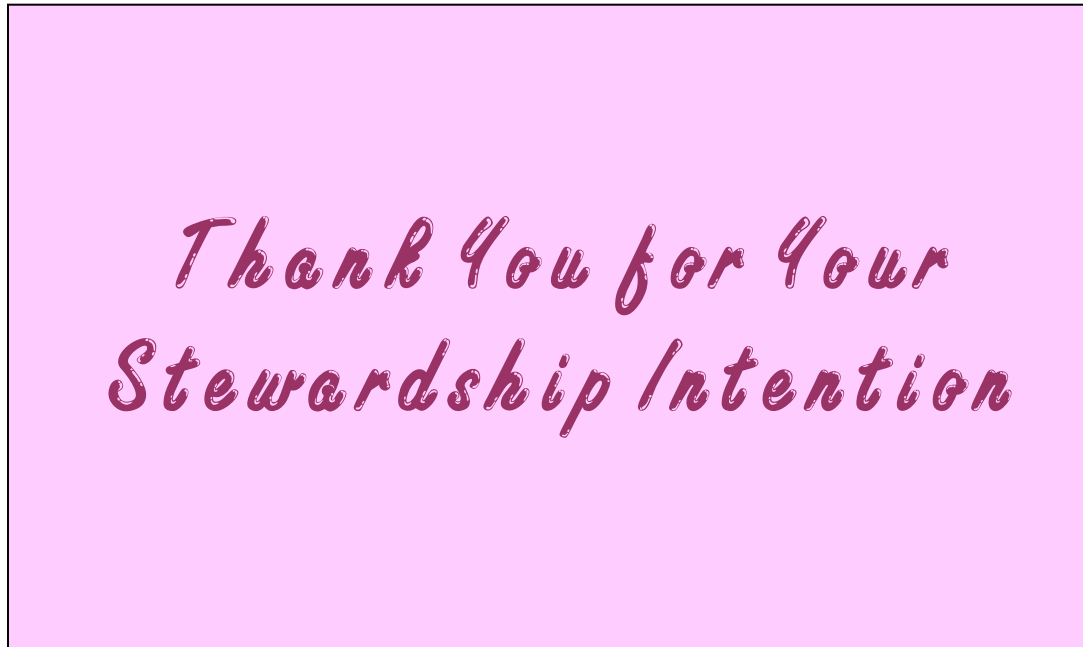


TIME · TALENT · TREASURE

In the weeks following your parish's Stewardship Weekend, it is very important that parishioners, who have committed to share their time and talent, be recognized for practicing their Christian stewardship. Those parishioners who responded to the Ministry Fair or those who completed a Time and Talent Commitment Card at Mass should be thanked for their gifts. *Please refer to Exhibit T below.*

Exhibit T: Sample Thank You Card

Front of Card



Inside of Card

Thank you for sharing your God-given gifts of time and talent. Your response has been both humbling and inspiring. Your gifts will enable us to continue and expand our work for God. It also shows your sincere desire to continue the mission of the Church.

We look forward to working together, in the Body of Christ, for the life of our parish community.

May the Lord bless you for your stewardship of time and talent.

Gratefully in Christ,

(Pastor)

It is recommended that bulletin announcements, pulpit announcements and Prayers of the Faithful be utilized in order to educate and promote the practice of good stewardship within your parish community. *Please refer to Exhibit U, V and W below.*

Exhibit U: Sample Bulletin Announcements for Week 6

- ✚ In our daily lives, we manage our family and work responsibilities. But to become occupied with these important matters to the exclusion of the need of others outside our home or work is a mistake we could carry into eternity.
- ✚ We are all stewards – managers of the many gifts God has bestowed upon us. Our challenge as Christians is to make good use of those gifts.”
- ✚ “Happiness lies more in giving than in receiving.” (Acts 20:35)

Exhibit V: Sample Pulpit Announcements for Week 6

Thank you for joining us last weekend for our parish’s Ministry Fair. It was a tremendous success! Over ____ parishioners came forward to commit a portion of their time and talent in gratitude to God for all His many blessings.

or

Last weekend ____ parishioners completed their Time and Talent Commitment Card. Thank you for responding to God’s generosity in your life by sharing your gifts of time and talent with our parish community. May God bless you.

Exhibit W: Sample Prayers of the Faithful for Week 6

- ✚ That we may hear the voice of Jesus in our lives and commit ourselves to a life of true stewardship...Let us pray to the Lord.
- ✚ May our gifts enable us to more effectively carry out the mission of our parish and the mission of the Church throughout the world...Let us pray to the Lord.
- ✚ May we be granted the grace of conversion; the grace to know who we are, to whom we belong and how we are to live; the grace to repent and change and grow; the grace to become better stewards...We pray to the Lord.

**If you would like more information about implementing stewardship in your parish,
please contact:**

**Office of Stewardship & Development
Roman Catholic Diocese of Providence
One Cathedral Square
Providence, RI 02903
Telephone (401) 277-2121
Fax (401) 277-2120
www.providencediocese.org**