



Grateful for God's countless blessings, a parishioner at Saint Thomas More Parish in Narragansett commits a portion of her time and talent.

Michael Renzi is a parishioner at Saint Thomas More Parish in Narragansett. He previously served as the Stewardship Committee Chairperson responsible for keeping the spirit of stewardship alive at his parish. He refers to stewardship as the "perpetual journey of awareness, an awareness of the many ways we can be stewards of the Lord's gifts," and states that stewardship is not a program or an event, but is an attitude about how we care for God's gifts. The parish's annual Ministry Fair re-vitalizes the awareness of parishioners in what they already do for others and in how much more we can do as grateful stewards. Michael states, "Caring about, tending to, and protecting God's gifts to us is our expression of stewardship." At his parish, stewardship is a part of a daily routine where parishioners pray the rosary in groups, prepare food for funeral collations, and bring cheer to those in the homebound community. Parishioners also institute new ministries such as the SDW Group, Men's Prayer Meetings, and the holiday adopt-a-family programs. Michael Renzi affirms, "Our awareness of the beauty and needs around us and our committed actions to tend to them is the measure of our stewardship."

In 1992, the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops published a Pastoral Letter entitled, *Stewardship: A Disciple's Response*. Their definition of stewardship reached far beyond financial contributions and encouraged Catholics to live their lives as disciples of Jesus. This thought conversion begins a life-long process of sharing our gifts of time, talent and treasure out of gratitude, not out of obligation. Living our lives as true stewards reminds us of our baptismal promises and becomes the motivational force behind our actions.

As Catholics, we are encouraged to share what we have with others, to respect our neighbors as ourselves and to assist those less fortunate. We typically respond to this request when asked and proceed to go about our daily lives until the next request is heard. What most individuals do not realize is that by sharing of ourselves and helping those around us, we are, in essence, practicing Christian stewardship.



TIME · TALENT · TREASURE

If you would like more information about stewardship, please contact:

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. . .the Good News.

"We have been gifted by God."

No matter how you attempt to evaluate its effectiveness, stewardship is basically an attitude and a spirit that are very difficult to measure. However, please read the following testimonies of parishioners who tell how the practice of Christian stewardship has changed their lives and the character of their parish communities.

Eduardo Birbuet serves as an Hispanic Pastoral Assistant at Saint Patrick Parish in Providence. He affirms that the parish's recent Ministry Fair was prepared with pride and joy, and was momentous, "where we were able to mingle with respect and admiration." Eduardo said, "It is at these particular moments that we feel the character and the image of the community. We say inside of us, 'I want to be a part of this, this is what I like, and this feels like home.'" He adds, "This made a good impression on people."



After her retirement, Deborah Pistacchio, a parishioner at Saint Joseph Parish in Ashton, was looking for ways to share more of her gifts of time and talent. For her, Stewardship Weekend introduced the many opportunities available to serve at her parish. She states, "Parishioners who may have been nervous about volunteering can now become a more integral part of the parish at a level that is comfortable for them."

As Religious Formation Director, Jennifer Marran has noticed how Stewardship has grown at Christ The King Parish in Kingston. She states, "As our awareness of the abundance of God's gifts continues to increase, so does our desire to make a return to God. We are learning that stewardship and discipleship require ongoing commitment and a renewed challenge to become the people God calls us to be. Like a waterfall, this response overflows into all we do. Every year, parishioners find new ways to share, and we are a better community because of it. As our parish and personal stewardship have grown, it has spilled over into our Religious Formation program and has strengthened the bonds among liturgy, classes and families. Each year, as students reflect upon the many gifts and talents they have been blessed with, each one pledges to share their time, talent and treasure in a new way. As Religious Formation Director, I see this on a large scale as catechists share activities and ideas that increase each year, from student commitment cards, bulletin boards and posters, to preparing tray decorations and inspirational messages for Meals on Wheels recipients in addition to cooking meals for the local shelter. At Christ the King, we are learning to become the Eyes and Hands of Christ."



Adults and children of all ages enjoy the festivities during Stewardship Weekend at Christ the King Parish in Kingston.



A young parishioner indicates her interest in sharing her gifts of time and talent as an altar server at Saint Mary of the Bay Parish in Warren.

Carolyn Mello Pryor is grateful to be a part of the Stewardship efforts at Saint Jean Baptiste and Saint Mary of the Bay Parish Community in Warren. She states, "An active stewardship program lets each person know that he or she has something special to offer that can enhance the lives of our parish community and the community at large. So many parishioners came forward at our Ministry Fair to offer their time and talent for the benefit of us all." Reflecting on how stewardship is beginning to change the character of her parish community, she adds, "The spirit of enthusiasm and family is absolutely infectious!" Frank and Therese Silvia are also members of the Stewardship Committee. Frank is a greeter at Mass and Therese teaches religious education, and together, they share their time and talent at many of the parish's social gatherings. They have witnessed how stewardship has sparked an enthusiastic response from their parish community. Therese states, "We're all busy – we all have demands on our time, but if we really try, we can find a way to share our blessings. We've heard it said, 'what we do for ourselves dies with ourselves, but what we do for others lives forever.' We know now how true this really is."