

Hello – I am going to begin by sharing a little bit about how our parish wanted to change the way our parishioners heard the word Stewardship.

A few of us on our Pastoral Team learned about a stewardship retreat in Wichita, Kansas and were encouraged to go.

We were motivated to attend for several reasons - we had:

- Big Debt
- Inconsistent collections
- We were Un-formed
- Wasted energies on secular things
- Parishioners were very busy, but service was not grounded in faith
- We saw little advancement in our overall spiritual journey

We were in need of CONVERSION!

Of course, going in we had questions.

- How can we increase parishioner tithes,
- Increase Parishioner involvement,
- Most importantly, how can we create grounded/sustainable spiritual growth?

Some of you may know the philosophy of the diocese in Wichita Kansas, that Monsignor McGread began many years ago – that we are *all* called to live a “Stewardship Way of Life”! What does that mean exactly?

Becoming more and more aware that everything is a gift and blessing—that all that we are and have is a gift from God. This means accepting the biblical truth that we own nothing. Scripture (Job 1) reminds us that we come into the world with nothing and we leave the world with nothing. A *stewardship way of life* involves recognizing God as the sole creator and owner of all that we are and have and accepting the fact that we are merely the stewards or managers of God’s gifts and blessings. Our mission is to manage and use wisely and responsibly all that God has placed in our care.

As we grow into a stewardship way of life, we gradually develop a lifestyle marked by generosity. A life of generosity is a clear sign that we do in fact believe and accept the biblical truth that God owns it all.

As we seek to develop a stewardship way of life, we are aware that one day we will have to account for our stewardship here on earth.

We knew that we needed to communicate to our parishioners that Stewardship requires a shift in perspective — in the very way we view life itself. God has shown mercy to each and every one of us and given us a life of abundance. How will we view our life in the context of “gift”, and express our gratitude to God? How were *we* going to communicate this?

First by introducing and educating our parishioners about the Four Pillars of a Parish Stewardship - which *is* the “*heartbeat*” of living a stewardship way of life. These four pillars are: Hospitality, Prayer, Formation and Service. We then aligned our ministries within these four pillars... remembering to connect the dots between Discipleship & Stewardship.

We also needed to identify that there two kinds of parishioners:

- Faithful Christian Stewards - *Recognize* them & feed them
- Those hungering to be - *How* will we develop & feed them

We know that it begins with one heart at a time...