
PRAYER FOR SHARING

O God,

Our loving Creator and Giver of all good gifts, bless our parish, strengthen our faith, and grant us the spirit of Christian stewardship so that we may give generously of our time, talent, and treasure to the spreading of Your kingdom here in our parish and throughout the world. This we ask through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, Who lives and reigns with You, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, One God, now and forever.

Amen.

world. *“Every member of the Church is called to evangelize, and the practice of authentic Christian stewardship inevitably leads to evangelization”* (United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, *Stewardship: A Disciple’s Response*, p. 33).

From the commitment we make to our brothers and sisters with whom we gather, we are able to move in all directions and reach out to all people. The Archdiocese of Detroit’s publication, *The Parish Pastoral Council Guidelines and Handbook*, teaches:

“For most of us, an important way we experience communion and mission is in our respective parishes. It is there that we hear God’s Word and are nourished by the Eucharist so that we can live the reality of our communion with God and each other. In the Parish setting we experience power in the Eucharist. Its energy sends us forth in mission to evangelize and serve, inviting others to share our life.”

A commitment to Christian stewardship by our parish communion allows us to teach, heal, inspire, and offer hope to the world as an expression of our faith in Jesus Christ that all we have to give comes from Him who brought us together.

“This is how all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.”
(John 13:35)



CALLED BY CHRIST GIFTED BY THE SPIRIT

*Sharing Our God-Given Gifts
with the Parish Communion*

*To Share Christ in and
through the Church*



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“There are different gifts but the same Spirit; there are different services but the same Lord; and there are different activities but it is the same God, Who activates all of them in everyone. To each person the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good.”

(1 Corinthians 12:4-7)

As St. Paul teaches, the Lord endows each of us with unique and special gifts. Some of us have gifts for leadership, some for healing, others for administering. Some of us have gifts for building or growing things, some for nurturing or consoling others, still others for teaching or serving as mentors. But whatever our gifts, as Christians we recognize that they come from God. We bless these gifts and we bless the Lord for His goodness.

As Christian stewards, we also recognize that our gifts are meant to be cultivated and shared with others, beginning with our family and friends, with those we gather to share the Eucharist, and with the world. The challenge for us is recognizing the sacredness of our gifts and acknowledging the importance of sharing them.

How Americans Spend Their Time

It has been reported that by the time the average American reaches age 50, he or she will have spent a full 10 of those years in front of the television set. Other studies

reveal sobering insights into how the average American chooses to spend his or her “free” time each week:

- Television viewing - 18 hours
- On the Internet - 15 hours
- Socializing, eating and drinking - 14 hours
- Shopping and self improvement - 6 hours
- Sports, exercise and recreation - 2 hours
- Religious activities and volunteering - 1 hour

How we gather together as Christians to live, work, minister to one another, and worship together is a sign of how we anticipate the coming reign of God. It also gives evidence of another fundamental principle of Christian stewardship — sharing our talents and skills with our parish communion and the larger community. The list of activities above reveals something significant about how Americans choose to spend their time. For Christian stewards, re-prioritizing time in order to share our God-given gifts means challenging those cultural “values.”

Participating in the Life of our Parish

Celebrating the Eucharist means more than just attending Mass for one hour on the weekend. We are called to participate in the life of our parish communion. Christ calls us to make His presence known in concrete ways. That call requires involvement, and the gift we give of ourselves blesses our particular communion of Christians and blesses those whom our parish hopes to touch. Christ has called us to use our gifts “to love and serve the Lord” — to be sent forth. Sharing our God-given skills and talents by actively participating in the life of our parish communion is an expression of stewardship.

A commitment to stewardship motivates us to use our gifts to serve our communion of faith. If we are going to love and serve God’s people, and thus God Himself, doing so for a particular place and specific group of people helps assure us that such service is real and responsible.

Building up the Body of Christ

The life of a parish communion is animated by the life of God because it is the embodiment of the presence of the risen Christ. The parish further embodies the presence, fruits, and work of the Holy Spirit. In short, the parish lives a life appropriate to Christian stewardship. It is the vocation of all of us who gather together around the Eucharistic table to live lives of gratitude by serving others, proclaiming the reign of God, and promoting communion among ourselves.

It is important to remember that our mission as Christians entails first going to those we know, those who share communion with us — our family, our friends, and those with whom we celebrate the Eucharist. The parish communion is where we most profoundly experience the many ways in which Jesus is made present. First and foremost, our task is to build up the Body of Christ, sharing with others who also believe that Christ is risen.

Stewardship and Evangelization: Offering Hope to the World

Having entered into communion with Jesus and created community with those who know that He is present among us, we are enabled to proclaim together as one body of faith to all people that God is indeed active in the