

## **21.2 Week 1 – Homily – The Spirituality of Stewardship**

Did you ever have a thirst, which no matter what you tried, you couldn't seem to satisfy? This "thirst for satisfaction" is a very basic element of our human nature. It is carried over into many parts of our lives. We find ourselves often wanting or wishing things to be new and different. Our cars, homes, jobs, relationships, finances – even when on the surface seem to be quite satisfactory, and we thirst for more. It is an attitude ingrained in us by our culture.

The story of the young, rich man in the Gospel is the story of most of us. We are good people, we work hard and we are honest. Compared with much of the rest of the world, we could also be called wealthy in terms of material possessions. And yet, with all we have, many times we still seem to be unsatisfied....still thirsty. At some point this may lead us to ask, what really is it that is missing in my life? Despite all of his riches, the young man in the Gospel asked a similar question.

"Good Teacher, what must I do to share in everlasting life"? Having followed the commandments, Jesus looked into his heart and gave him the answer he asked for, but did not what to hear, "Go and sell what you have and give it to the poor. You will then have treasure in heaven. After that, come and follow me. At that, the young man's face fell and he went away sad." He couldn't do it. After all, these were his possessions....he earned them....he had a right to them. He could believe in God up to a point, but he could not give up control of what he owned. Sadly, by that choice, he would never quench his thirst for satisfaction.

Most of us experience that same intense pride of ownership. Not just in relationship to material possessions but also to our talents and accomplishments. We like being able to call things *our own* and we tend to protect these "belongings" of ours.

Stewardship means to take care of or to manage. To be a steward assumes that we are not the true owners of the possessions...merely the caretakers. Christ isn't asking each of us to literally sell all that we have. But He is asking us to recognise that all we have – every possession, skill relationship and circumstance – is only by the grace of God. Each day that we awaken is really a gift in itself. When we accept this perspective, we experience a tremendous freedom and peace.

The problem discussed in today's Gospel is that the more possessions we have....the more self-pride or self reliance we experience and the harder it is to recognise God as the gracious provider of what we have. That is why the young man went away sad. That is why Christ tells us in the Gospel "it is harder for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the Kingdom of God." And that is why some of us continue to be thirsty – lacking in true satisfaction. Understand that it isn't the possessions themselves that are bad. It is our attitude towards them that can get in our way.

What is it that you might be possessing too tightly in your life? It could be something material or something else, like an excessive hobby. Think about it. Is there something that you would be afraid you couldn't live without? Could you let go if God asked you to in order to follow him more closely? To do so requires you to stretch your faith – to place your trust in God, as a child trusts his father or mother. What God wants is to show us how much He loves us and will care for us, *if we let him*. By our free will, He leaves the choice to us. If we *choose* to cling too tightly to our possessions, like the young rich man, we too will go away sad.

Stewardship calls us to evaluate our possessions on three levels – time, service and finances. Some people give generously in a financial sense, but guard their time very preciously as their own. Others share their time and service but hold back financially because they worry about their own needs. As we study Stewardship over the next few weeks, we will learn to appreciate how our time, service and incomes are gifts from God and we will look at ways to put them to use as his grateful Stewards. Those who choose to respond will experience the true joy of giving, and the only thing that will satisfy their thirst for lasting satisfaction – God Abiding lover

I'd like to close with Stewardship prayer, of which you all will receive a copy of today in the bulletin.

## **21.3 Week 1 Bulletin Announcement**

### **Stewardship – a way of life**

Last week you should have received a letter introducing stewardship and a brochure titled “Stewardship: A Disciples Way of Life”.

Today our parish is embarking on a journey of Stewardship. In the next few weeks we will be exploring in detail together the concept of Stewardship. A simple definition of Stewardship is as follows:  
*Stewardship is a complete lifestyle, a life of total accountability and responsibility acknowledging God as Creator and owner of all. As disciples of Christ, stewards see themselves as caretakers of all God's gifts. Gratitude for these gifts is expressed in prayer and worship and by eagerly sharing these gifts out of love of God and one another.*

### **Stewardship – Questions & Answers**

#### **What does the word “stewardship” mean?**

Answer: Oxford dictionary defines stewardship as, being accountable for the management of another's assets. The Church defines stewardship as:  
Acknowledging God as Creator and Owner of all that we are and all that we have. Our families, our talents, our faith, our wealth, our time, our very lives are all gifts from God. Stewards are caretakers of these gifts. Stewardship is receiving these gifts with gratitude. It is following faithfully, sharing our gifts lovingly and generously, living responsibly and possessing sensibly. Stewardship is responsible management of our gifts of time, talent and resources. It enhances our relationship with God and each other. Being a “Good Steward” brings peace of mind and balance to our lifestyles.

### **What difference will, being a “Good Steward”, make in my life?**

Answer: The difference will be seen in our relationships, especially our relationship with God. Recognising God as the Giver of all that we have and all that we are brings us closer to God. Stewardship also builds happy healthy families and communities. Above all stewardship brings peace of mind and balance to our lives when we use all the gifts we having been given responsibly, trusting in God to provide us with all we need. Stewardship changes our motivation for sharing from ‘**giving to a need**’ to ‘**needing to give in gratitude**’ – for all that we have been given.

### **Isn’t committing to Stewardship asking a lot of me?**

Answer: At first it would appear that yes, stewardship is asking a lot of us. It challenges our current emphasis on materialism, consumerism and leisure time. It is important to remember that God does expect us to enjoy the fruits of our labour, stewardship simply challenges us to prioritise differently. It is an **attitude of gratitude**. It is a gradual conversion of heart, mind, and values. We become better managers of what we have been given. It brings peace of mind to our lives and the amazing thing about stewardship is that it is profoundly rewarding. So does stewardship ask a lot of us? In light of today’s consumerism perhaps, but when considering the benefits to family and community, definitely not!

### **Is Stewardship just another way the Church asks for more money?**

Answer: No! Stewardship is a complete lifestyle. It is our faith in action. Stewardship builds stronger relationships with God, family and community. Stewardship is about being Christ-centred rather than self-centred. Profound gratitude, justice and love become the fundamental motives for sharing. Stewardship takes a positive view of money. It sees money not as a medium of exchange but as a symbol of the person who has it. We reveal something about who we are by how we acquire it, use it and share it. It is not about giving to the needs of the parish budget; it is about needing to give out of gratitude to God.

*“For, as I can testify, they voluntarily gave according to their means, and even beyond their means, begging us earnestly for the privilege of sharing in this ministry to the saints.”*

(2 Cor. 8:3-4)

### **Am I expected to give all of my time, talent and resources to the church?**

Answer: No. Giving is not limited to the church. Most people give of their time, talent and resources to organisations outside the church. Stewardship is not limited to your individual parish. There are six zones of stewardship: God, family, church, community, work and the world. The percentage of time, talent and resources you give to the church requires personal prayer and reflection.

## **How important is it that children are taught about Stewardship?**

Answer: It is very important. Children today are struggling with a lot of issues. Not the least of which is self-esteem. What better way to build their self-esteem than by helping them realise they are a gift from God that they too have talents they can share with others. More and more parents are encouraging their children to return a percentage of their allowance or other income through the use of children's envelopes. Serving as altar servers or in the choir, or helping collect food and clothing for the poor, are wonderful opportunities for our young people to learn about stewardship. They too, are part of our community, our families. Encouraging them to share their gifts shows them that they are seen as gifts to us. Understanding stewardship at a young age builds a strong foundation for a life of receiving gratefully, living responsibly, and sharing generously.

## **Stewardship Team**

Together with the Parish Council I am delighted to announce that the following parishioners have accepted roles in the new Stewardship Team:

Chair  
Deputy Chair  
Team (6)

### What does the Stewardship Team do?

The Team will be the focal point for Stewardship within the parish. It is a permanent team that will function all year long. The members will be responsible for the on-going communication of the message of Stewardship to the parish and the school.

## **Parish EXPO**

Next weekend at all Masses we will be conducting a Parish EXPO where all Parish ministries will set-up a stall and provide information and advice to parishioners. We have prepared a Ministry Bulletin (a copy will be available for each family) which provides details of each ministry e.g. what is involved, who to contact and what commitment is required to be involved as a volunteer.

It is important from a Stewardship point of view that everyone in the Parish is aware of the ministries we have and give consideration to becoming involved in one or more where new volunteers are required. We strongly encourage you to spend some time at EXPO and to join in the hospitality to be provided.

## **21.4 Week 1 – Pulpit Announcements**

Last week you should have received a letter introducing stewardship and a brochure titled “Stewardship, a Disciples Way of Life”.

This Sunday, we kick off our initial/annual Stewardship programme. Stewardship redirects our attention to sacred Scripture, which teaches us that all that we have in this world, our time, service and our finances are to be treated as gifts from God rather than our own possessions. Our job is to use these gifts wisely, always sharing

generously to build up God's Kingdom. As a parish family, we take time to celebrate together our faith and discern how to put our gifts into service for one another and for those in need. Please open your hearts in the weeks ahead and do not judge too quickly. This is an exciting opportunity to grow in faith and to express that faith in action.

## **Stewardship Team**

Introduce the Stewardship Team and ask God to bless them.

### **Announce the Parish Expo next weekend**

We have produced a Ministry Bulletin, which will be available for everyone next weekend prior to the EXPO. The EXPO will be held at all Masses and we invite you to participate in the festivities. Please ensure you learn as much as possible about the ministries, which are of interest to you. **Please stay for a while and enjoy the hospitality prepared by the Stewardship Team.**

## ***21.5 Week 1 – Prayers of the Faithful***

### **Each Week – Prayer of the Faithful**

#### **Last Prayer of the Faithful Before the Collection**

Lord God, we thank you for the gifts, talents and abilities you have given each of us. These are represented by the contributions we are about to collect and offer at the altar. May these gifts enable us more effectively to carry out the mission of our parish. For this we pray to the Lord.

### **Week 1 – Prayer of the Faithful**

Lord, you are the giver of every gift, including the most precious and holy gift of Your Son Jesus Christ. Help us to remember how important it is for us to also be generous givers of gifts, so we can carry out Christ's mission for His Church on earth, we pray to the Lord.

## 22 Week 2 Activities

### 22.1 Week 2 – Sample Letter – Gift Reflection/Time and Service Sheets

Mr and Mrs Fred Parishioner  
487 Pitt Street

**SYDNEY NSW 2000**

Dear Fred and Betty,

**“Such as My love has been for you...  
so must your love be for each other.”**

In a letter and brochure you received last week, I asked you to reflect on the many blessings you have received and consider this as a time for personal renewal in your relationship with the Lord. I asked you to think about stewardship of time, service and sharing - and how you and/or your family might make a new commitment to giving:-

**Your Time** - For many of us, time is our most precious commodity. The demands of work, school, community, parish and family are overwhelming at times. Occasionally, when we feel out of control, we must get off the merry-go-round and rethink what life is all about. We must seek to balance our time against what we know we must do. I would hope that you consider re-examining your priorities to give more of your time to our parish and the larger community.

**Your Service** - Every one of us is talented in some way. It may be in music, art, writing, organising, planning, driving a car, supervising a program, even making other people laugh. Our parish provides each and every one of you with an opportunity to use any talent you have. I hope you will consider committing a greater share of your talents to our parish and community.

**Your Sharing** - Your financial support is a major reason why we are able to continue to provide our religious, education and social ministries. The primary source of our parish's financial support is the weekly offertory collection. Stewardship of sharing involves committing a regular portion of our income to our church and our community. It is important that a portion of this go to our parish. I hope you will consider committing a percentage of your annual income to our parish and making your contribution on a regular basis.

This weekend at all Masses you will hear from me and from (name/names of lay witnesses) who will talk about their personal experiences with stewardship.

Accompanying this letter is the Ministry Bulletin and the Gift Reflection Guide and the Time and Service Sheet. Once you have visited EXPO, reviewed the Bulletin and completed the Gift Reflection Guide I would be grateful if you could prayerfully consider how you and your family could make a difference in our parish and complete the Time and Service Sheet and place it in the plate next weekend.

In the name of Christ,  
Father

## **22.2 Week 2 Homily**

*“Above all, let your love for one another be constant, for love covers a multitude of sins. Be mutually hospitable without complaining. As generous distributors of God’s manifold grace, put your gifts at the service of one another, each in the measure you have received.” I Peter 4: 8-10*

This passage is one of many in Scripture which helps us understand and become aware of what the concept of stewardship is all about, and how, by discovering its true meaning, we will undergo a personal transformation.

Contrary to what many people feel or assume, stewardship is not a hidden term for fund-raising. It is a powerful concept that will change our faith life and the faith life of our parish.

For stewardship is a way of life. It is based on the biblical view of God as Creator and us as His servants. We are accountable to Him for the use of our gifts of time, service and income that He gives us during our life on earth.

Stewardship means that we are not owners of all that we have on earth but we are only stewards.

Stewardship provides us with the foundation for a deepened faith, for all of us, and our parish.

Stewardship begins with an awakening of the need that we have that no one can dispute, because it is universal and ever-present. It is the personal need of each one of us to return to the Lord, a portion of the gifts He has given us of time, service and income...in gratitude for what He has done for us.

Stewardship is the giving of the “first portion”, not the portion of the gifts that is left over. You will find when you decide to give to God the first portion of your time, service and income that what, at first, seemed difficult soon becomes easy for us to do.

What we have left over is often more than enough for our own needs. Putting God first in our lives by practicing stewardship deepens our faith in a way that we never dreamed possible.

As you are aware, we are conducting a stewardship programme at our parish, and I hope you are giving prayerful consideration to how you might commit your time and service, and your financial resources to our parish.

Today we are distributing the second letter about stewardship, which includes a Time and Service Sheet. Please review it and then decide prayerfully whether you would like to make a first time commitment to a ministry or to maintain or increase the time and service you give to assist the parish.

Let us prayerfully reflect on the power of stewardship and let this concept transform our hearts so that we may live a life of greater fulfilment and peace.

And, let us use the opportunity we have today of listening to one of our parishioners who has found the personal value of stewardship. Today, we will be hearing from (names of parishioner).

## **22.3 Week 2 – Lay Witness Talk**

The purpose of the Lay Witness Talk is to help parishioners to realise that Stewardship is possible on a practical level in their own lives. This message is for everyone, no matter how much they have to give or where they are in their faith journey. The purpose is not to preach but simply to share from actual experience. The speaker(s) should be candid, humble and authentic (from the heart). This three to five minute talk by a fellow parishioner can have more impact than any other aspect of the programme.

The talk should include answers to the following questions:

- When did I first hear about stewardship?
- What was my initial reaction to the concept of stewardship?
- What motivated me to accept stewardship as a way of life?
- What difference has stewardship made in my life?
- When did I begin to experience the benefits of stewardship as a way of life?
- How does my family give of our time and talent?

### **Do**

- Talk about the personal need of each one of us; the need of the giver to give
- Arouse feelings of gratitude for all God gives us
- Talk about giving God a grateful share of your income
- Point out that a grateful share is the first share
- Emphasise the joy that comes to those who give God the first share of their time, service and income
- Tell how you have experienced this joy yourself
- Say “Many of you know from your own experience that what I have told you is true.” Invite others to share our experience. (This thanks those who are already generous and emphasises the positive.)
- Explain that the Catholic heritage of sacrifice has provided the impressive network of churches, schools, hospitals and other institutions we enjoy today.
- Reflect on the many ways that the mission of the church touches each of us, spiritually, socially and academically through our Parish lives

### **Don't**

- Use bargaining language: I gave this much and God did this for me
- Emphasise Parish needs
- Get too personal or specific
- Talk dollar amounts: “If we all just average \$10 a week” ..... give \$2 more each week”....our fair share.”
- Threaten the consequences of failure to give: “We won't be able to heat/air condition the church”....”We'll have to close the school.”

### **Talk Outline**

The following is intended as a general outline. Please use your own words. The speaker should practice the talk in front of the others and also review it with the Parish Priest.

#### 1. Introduction

“Good morning, my name is-----, Father asked me to share a few words as fellow parishioner about Stewardship.”

#### 2. Reaction to the Programme

- Share what you like about the Stewardship approach:
- Emphasis on faith/spirituality
- Positive inspiring message
- Better understanding of importance of giving

#### 3. Personal Experience

Share the joy that you experienced when you made sacrifices to be truly generous with time, service and income

#### 4. Invitation to Participate

“God has blessed each of us with different kinds of gifts. When we combine our gifts together, we will benefit individually and collectively as a parish family/community. Please join us by participating in this exiting programme”

### **22.4 Lay Witness Sample Presentations**

The following are actual presentations given by lay witnesses. While these presentations are individualised and cannot be used as they are, they serve as models for how lay witness presenters can express their thoughts.

#### **22.4.1 Lay Witness Sample Presentation - 1**

Stewardship means different things to different people. Let me share with you what stewardship has come to mean to me.

Reflecting back on the time spent growing up, I’ve realised more and more not only how loving my parents were but also how wise they were. I learned a lot from my parents, but there are four things I learned from their example that have had a particular impact on my life. First was that God loves us. He is good and we can trust Him. Second was that each of us is given certain gifts and talents and one of our responsibilities in life is to discover what those gifts and abilities are, develop them and use them to benefit others. Third was that to whom more is given, more is expected. Fourth was that having a job and spending time with your family is important but not enough. We also need to spend time being with and helping others.

With that kind of learning and my parents’ kind of example, I did not have a great deal of difficulty in grasping the concept of stewardship of prayer and service. I didn’t call it that, but I did it. From the time I was in high school onward, I made sure I spent time doing things for and with other people, mostly through different types

of volunteer work. As I continued to give of my time and service, I realised that I was growing spiritually. God and other people became a more important part of my life.

After graduating from university, I continued to give of my time and service through various church groups and community boards. Yet something was still missing. You see, I gave of my time and service but not my financial resources. I reasoned that I spent so much time in church and community activities that I didn't need to give regularly to the church or other community groups. Sure, I gave some, but it was sporadic and unplanned. It wasn't until my wife and I completed a course for engaged couples seven years ago that I started to look even more seriously at my relationship with God. We realised that we couldn't hold back on any area of our giving because God wasn't holding back on any area of His giving. We also decided that we wanted God to be the centre of our marriage. That led us to a decision to start giving of our finances in a planned and proportionate way. We started giving two percent of our income to the church and other charities in 1984. Five years later, we are giving at eight percent of our income to the church and other charities.

As we continued to give, we've learned that we are growing more spiritually and that our faith is deepening. By giving as we have, we have tried to place material things and money in their proper perspective. That has caused us to look at what we need versus what we want. For example, when we bought a new home almost two years ago, we bought a somewhat smaller house than we might have if we hadn't been practicing stewardship of our financial resources.

Stewardship has become a way of life for us. It's not always easy, but we try to live it. Presently, I am spending eight hours a week in volunteer work outside of my job and my wife is spending three hours per week in volunteer work. In the area of sharing of our financial resources, 80 percent of our giving is church-related while the other 20 percent goes to community agencies. My wife and I are planning to move to the biblical tithe, 10 percent of our income, next month.

Stewardship of time, service and sharing has been and will continue to be an important part of our lives.

## **22.4.2 Lay Witness Sample Presentation - 2**

Stewardship: What is it? 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 program in my parish. We looked at various programs in existence and the more I looked at them the more I became convinced stewardship was something our parish should do. I guess I was really experiencing my own conversion to stewardship as a way of life. I kept seeing that the Church could never flourish and grow if everyone was supporting it like I was, with a contribution each week that I would never miss.

As I look back at my own decision on stewardship over last recent years, I notice that my ideals have changed. There were lots of reasons that I felt we should begin stewardship in our family. God has been very good to us. My husband and I have two healthy, happy children.

We have finally passed through the struggling years in our own business and now had time to think about other things. As I began to think about the church and what it meant to me, I realised 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 without 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 about the wonders of God. It should be able to care for the sick, feed the needy, 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 my skills. But there had to be a strong commitment of time and a commitment of sharing my finances if the church was going to be able to do all the things I wanted it to.

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. My husband is non-Catholic. Would he feel the same as I do? How would we handle contributions of time and finance to two churches? After we talked about how we felt and agreed that it was something we would try, my husband offered a simple solution. We would give one-fourth of our financial resources and time to his church and three-fourths to my church since our two children were members of our parish. We have never had a problem with this method.

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 organisations 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 gift that fulfils 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 is the 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 should give.

### **22.4.3 Lay Witness Sample Presentation - 3**

I am here because our parish has meant so much in my life and in the life of my family. I have come to respect and appreciate the faith and parish family that previous generations passed on to us. Through the stewardship programme we are asked to make that same commitment, so that our faith and parish family will continue to prosper and become the heritage we pass on to future generations.

It is not my intention to provide you with any bad news about what might happen if we don't give more of our time, service and financial resources. I am here to talk about good news. The good news is that each of us present here today has a distinct need to give.

The whole principle behind stewardship is how we use the time, skill and financial resources that we have; the gift that God gives us. We must develop that need to give ---a positive feeling about giving.

Years ago, we would probably have been termed as convenient givers, or givers of leftovers after other needs were dealt with. The amount of time and money would frequently vary based on what was remaining.

After committing to stewardship, we found that things did work out in our lives and that it became a matter of setting our priorities and putting more trust in God, as we relinquish some of material things and some of time. We have been able to identify things that indicate the abounding generosity of the Lord.

I am not trying to tell you that I exemplify the perfect giver. I haven't reached that stage yet. But what we donate weekly represents a gift that we give voluntarily and feel good about doing. And the time that we give represents a gift.

The objective of the stewardship programme is to develop an awareness of stewardship and to examine our list of priorities. It is also to reflect on the Lord's generosity, so as to discover the need to return to the Lord the "first fruits" of our labour, not what is left over. I think a good feeling results from giving back to God our first gifts of time, service and financial resources.

We ask that you prayerfully reflect during the next 2 weeks over your commitment of time, skill and financial resources. It should be a commitment that you feel good about, a fair return for the abundance that the Lord provides in our lives.

It is through your sacrifice that the Church can continue its mission and give to coming generations a faith as strong as the one given to us. In short, stewardship is our response to the love and generosity of a kind God.

## **22.5 Week 2 – Bulletin Announcements**

### **Stewardship News**

This week a letter will be available for collection after Mass regarding Stewardship. Should anyone not attend Mass at this Church this weekend the letter will be mailed or delivered through the school.

You will find the material to be quite positive and uplifting. Included with the letter will be the Ministry Bulletin and a Time and Service sheet that lists the various organisations and ministries of the parish requiring additional volunteers. Please indicate those areas where you are currently involved and consider other areas where you may be able to share your gifts with your parish family.

### **Parish EXPO**

Today is EXPO Sunday and you are strongly encouraged to visit the stalls where detailed information will be available. This information will enable you to reflect on your gifts, where you can share them with the parish family and to complete a Time and Service sheet.

### **Stewardship Prayer**

Generous and loving God,  
You call us to be disciples of your Son Jesus  
and good stewards of all your many gifts.

Open our minds and hearts to a greater awareness  
and deeper appreciation of your countless blessings.

Transform us through the power of Your Spirit  
to nurture a stewardship way of life marked by faith-filled  
prayer, service to our neighbour and generous sharing of our  
financial resources.

Teach us to be faithful servants of your gifts.  
With Mary's help, may we return ten-fold the gifts

entrusted to us.

We pray through Christ, our Lord. Amen

## ***22.6 Week 2 – Pulpit Announcements***

### **Stewardship**

You will receive a letter from me today as you leave the Church with information about Stewardship. I promise that you will be rewarded by the time you spend studying and praying about how to exercise Stewardship in your life. Also included is the Ministry Bulletin and a Time and Service Sheet that lists all of our parish organisations and activities. This Parish is ours together. When each of us steps forward to play a part, no matter how large or small, we will become the kind of Parish family that God wants us to be.

### **Parish EXPO**

Today is EXPO Sunday and you are strongly encouraged to visit the stalls where detailed information will be available. This information will enable you to reflect on your gifts, assess where you can share them with the parish family and to complete a Time and Service sheet. **Please stay for a while and enjoy the hospitality prepared by the Stewardship Team.**

## ***22.7 Week 2 – Prayers of the Faithful***

### **Each Week – Prayer of the Faithful**

#### **Last Prayer of the Faithful Before the Collection**

Lord God, we thank you for the gifts, talents and abilities you have given each of us. These are represented by the contributions we are about to collect and offer at the altar. May these gifts enable us more effectively to carry out the mission of our parish. For this we pray to the Lord.

### **Week 2 – Prayer of the Faithful**

For all members of our parish, that through their Stewardship of time and service, they find a deeper relationship with the Lord and other members of the parish and the wider community. We pray to the Lord.

## Reflecting on our Gifts

The leaders of our faith community invite and encourage you to help build our *Community of Gifts*. Please complete this form to share how you believe your God-given gifts might be used in ministries. Our faith community's most valuable assets are its people, so it is critical to our ministry to help you discern, affirm and make wise choices about applying your gifts.

We need your response regardless of your age, previous involvement in our faith community, or time available for ministry.

Name: (Mr/Mrs/Ms) \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Postcode \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: Home: \_\_\_\_\_ Work: \_\_\_\_\_ Mobile: \_\_\_\_\_

### My gifts/interests are: (Please mark with a X all that apply)

<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> gardening	<input type="checkbox"/> sewing
<input type="checkbox"/> athletics	<input type="checkbox"/> leading	<input type="checkbox"/> sharing new visions/ideas
<input type="checkbox"/> building consensus	<input type="checkbox"/> library work	<input type="checkbox"/> social justice
<input type="checkbox"/> caring and compassion	<input type="checkbox"/> listening/discussing	<input type="checkbox"/> teaching
<input type="checkbox"/> children's activities	<input type="checkbox"/> maintenance team	<input type="checkbox"/> team building
<input type="checkbox"/> clerical work	<input type="checkbox"/> marketing	<input type="checkbox"/> telephoning
<input type="checkbox"/> communication	<input type="checkbox"/> mentoring	<input type="checkbox"/> video taping
<input type="checkbox"/> computers	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> visiting others
<input type="checkbox"/> cooking/serving food	<input type="checkbox"/> organising/coordinating	<input type="checkbox"/> welcoming & hospitality
<input type="checkbox"/> dancing	<input type="checkbox"/> photography	<input type="checkbox"/> working hard
<input type="checkbox"/> delegating	<input type="checkbox"/> planning	<input type="checkbox"/> writing
<input type="checkbox"/> new ways to use gifts	<input type="checkbox"/> praying	<input type="checkbox"/> youth ministry
<input type="checkbox"/> dramatics	<input type="checkbox"/> promoting programmes/ideas	<input type="checkbox"/> other gifts
<input type="checkbox"/> evaluating programmes	<input type="checkbox"/> public speaking	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> facilitating groups	<input type="checkbox"/> recording/sound systems	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> following up on tasks	<input type="checkbox"/> recruiting others	<input type="checkbox"/>

### I feel.....about using my gifts for ministry in our faith community:(Please mark with a X all that apply)

<input type="checkbox"/> curious	<input type="checkbox"/> afraid	<input type="checkbox"/> unsure of role
<input type="checkbox"/> complimented	<input type="checkbox"/> excited/enthusiastic	<input type="checkbox"/> eager to grow & learn
<input type="checkbox"/> reluctant	<input type="checkbox"/> reasonably comfortable	<input type="checkbox"/> other
<input type="checkbox"/> glad to use gifts	<input type="checkbox"/> burned out	<input type="checkbox"/>

**See over**

**My three greatest areas of experience (E) are:** (mark 1,2,3)

**My three greatest areas of interest (I) are:** (mark A,B,C)

**E I**

**E I**

___ __ aging	___ __ new members
___ __ caring/pastoral care	___ __ personnel/human resources
___ __ church at large	___ __ property management
___ __ communications/media	___ __ shared ministry & volunteerism
___ __ community outreach	___ __ small group ministry
___ __ ecumenism	___ __ social/fellowship
___ __ education: children	___ __ spiritual growth & development
___ __ education: teens	___ __ stewardship
___ __ education: adults	___ __ vocations
___ __ evangelism	___ __ worship, arts, music
___ __ finance/business management	___ __ youth
___ __ ministry in daily life	___ __ other

### **Sharing our Time and Service**

*In order for our parish to plan its ministries for the coming year, we depend on your participation to guide us in selecting and budgeting for our ministries.*

**I/We are willing to assist our parish by volunteering to help with the following ministries:**

Please mark with an X and circle those ministries where you are currently active and mark with an X any additional one(s) you would like to be involved with. Should you wish to discontinue involvement in a ministry please telephone the Parish Office.

*If there is a new ministry that you consider should be offered in the parish please record details on the bottom of the list and we will discuss its introduction with you.*

<b>Ministry</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>Ministry</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>Ministry</b>	<b>X</b>
Acolytes		Ecumenism		P & F School	
Altar Servers		Family Groups		Piety Store	
Altar Society		Family Masses		Prayer Group	
Bridge Club		Father Riley's Street Kids		Readers	
Bulletin Folder		Minister of the Eucharist		RCIA	
Catechists		Knights of the Southern Cross		St Vincent de Paul	
CWL		Liturgy Committee		Serra Club	
Children's Liturgy		Maintenance Committee		Social Committee	
Choir(s)		School Playgroup		Wardens	
Cleaner		Mothers Club		Welcoming Minister	
Counter		Music/Organist		Youth Group	

**Where a child or young adult wishes to volunteer for ministry please obtain a copy of this guide from the back of the Church or from the Parish Office.**

## **23 Week 3 Activities**

### **23.1 Week 3 – Sample Sharing Letter**

Mr and Mrs Tom Parishioner  
1234 Curia Street  
Thornleigh NSW 2120

Dear Mr and Mrs Parishioner,

We thank you for reviewing the instructional materials you have received on Stewardship and urge you to participate with our whole parish in this programme.

Once a year we will dedicate special time to celebrate together the gifts that God has given each of us as individuals, families and collectively as a parish family. Together, we can give special thanks to God for all our blessings and experience the joy of generosity in our own lives. In recognising God's call to share our gifts, we are each asked to restate our intentions to give of our time, service and income to Him and His people of this parish.

Accompanying this letter is Giving Guideline and a Sharing Card. Please remember that the amount you complete on the Sharing Card is not a binding commitment should your circumstances or considerations change. Trusting God in the area of our financial resources seems the hardest thing to do. How much you give each week or month isn't as important as giving in proportion to what you receive.

Please review the Suggested Giving Guidelines, and then decide what is right for you in good conscience. Please enclose your Sharing Card in the envelope and drop it in the collection on .....Sunday, ..... If you are away, you can bring it the following week or mail it to the parish office.

Thank you for your generosity I know that you will be rewarded.

If you have not already returned your prayer and service sheet, you may enclose it in the envelope provided along with your Sharing Card.

Yours in Christ,

Father

## 23.2 Income Sharing Guidelines

*How to move gradually toward stewardship – giving that is planned, proportionate and thankful*

1. Find your household income at the left of the chart below. Move across on the same line to find the amount you currently give weekly in the parish Sunday envelope. Move straight up the chart to find out what percentage of your income you current gift to your parish represents.
2. Please consider pledging at the next level (to the right). For example, if you are presently giving 2% to the parish, consider pledging 2.5% or even 3% now. **If you were to give the first hour of your income weekly to the work of the parish it would amount to around 2.5% of your income.**
3. Consider setting your eventual goal at 10% (5% to the parish and 5% to other charities). It may take a few years to get there, but it can be done by taking just one step at a time.

### Weekly Giving to Parish Envelopes

Household Income				Weekly to the Parish*								
Hourly	Weekly	Monthly	Yearly	1%	1.5%	2%	2.5%	3%	3.5%	4%	4.5%	5%
2.90	115	500	6,000	1.25	1.75	2.25	3.00	3.50	4.00	4.50	5.25	5.75
4.25	170	735	8,840	1.75	2.50	3.50	4.25	5.00	6.00	6.75	7.75	8.50
4.90	192	850	10,190	2.00	3.00	4.00	5.00	6.00	7.00	8.00	9.00	10.00
7.20	290	1,250	15,000	3.00	4.00	6.00	7.00	9.00	10.00	12.00	13.00	14.00
9.60	385	1,665	20,000	4.00	6.00	8.00	10.00	12.00	13.00	15.00	17.00	19.00
12.00	480	2,085	25,000	5.00	7.00	10.00	12.00	14.00	17.00	19.00	22.00	24.00
14.50	575	2,500	30,000	6.00	9.00	12.00	14.00	17.00	20.00	23.00	26.00	29.00
16.75	675	2,915	35,000	7.00	10.00	13.00	17.00	20.00	24.00	27.00	30.00	34.00
19.25	770	3,335	40,000	8.00	12.00	15.00	19.00	23.00	27.00	31.00	35.00	38.00
24.00	960	4,165	50,000	10.00	14.00	19.00	24.00	29.00	34.00	38.00	43.00	48.00
29.00	1,155	5,000	60,000	12.00	17.00	23.00	29.00	35.00	40.00	46.00	52.00	58.00
33.50	1,345	5,835	70,000	13.00	20.00	27.00	34.00	40.00	47.00	54.00	61.00	67.00
38.50	1,540	6,665	80,000	15.00	23.00	31.00	38.00	46.00	54.00	62.00	69.00	77.00
43.50	1,730	7,500	90,000	17.00	26.00	35.00	43.00	52.00	61.00	69.00	78.00	87.00
48.00	1,925	8,335	100,000	19.00	29.00	38.00	48.00	58.00	67.00	77.00	87.00	96.00
96.00	3,846	16,666	200,000	38.00	58.00	77.00	96.00	115.00	135.00	154.00	173.00	192.00

*\*You are asked to give an equal percentage to other charities (for example if you are giving 2% to the parish, give an additional 2% to other charities for 4% total giving). Other charities might include the Charitable Works Fund and the Project Compassion appeal.*

***Please complete and return the enclosed Sharing Card***

(Front)

## **Stewardship**

### **A Disciple's Way of Life**

Why do Parish Priests ask the congregation for money? Fundraising, sure, but there is much more to it than that. In fundraising and in other activities, the Parish Pastoral leaders are shaping the image of God, themselves, and the world, that the people hold. The goal of Stewardship is to teach people, sometimes subtly and sometimes powerfully, to see God as the source of all they have and all they are. It is important to see ourselves as sharing in the work of God by the use of our time, service, and financial resources.

There are many possible reasons for giving. Some give to meet a recognised need of the community. Others feel the need to give to meet a moral or legal obligation. However, the basis of thanksgiving is giving to live out the Christian way of life.

Living a Christian way of life, a Disciple's way of life, must be the basis for thanksgiving, as well as the giving of our time and service. Thanksgiving is an expression of the basic attitude toward God for the many gifts God has given to us and the trust we have in God as the ultimate source of our life and security. This demonstrates the sense of our relationship with God and the realisation of that relationship. God loves us unconditionally, so we must give all we have to God unconditionally as God has given to us.

Living a Disciple's way of life means being a steward of God's gifts. As stewards of God's creation we are given gifts to further God's creative and redemptive purposes, and have an obligation to use these gifts. Stewardship is a pattern of discipleship. As God's creative and redemptive purposes are most fully revealed in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ, so we are called to live this life of discipleship. It is a life directed toward the Kingdom, a life of giving of ourselves for the sake of the others. It is a call to love our neighbour and enemy as we love ourselves. Thanksgiving is an integral part of discipleship. Our entire lives are to be used to serve and give life to others, to open the world to the promises of God's Kingdom.

The Christian way of life provides a sense of the Church. The Church is a gathering of disciples who nourish and encourage one another in discipleship, whose lives of faith and salvation are interdependent, and who work together to accomplish the service and work of Christ. All members of the Church are responsible for the carrying on of the work of Christ in the world today. And one of the primary ways that we can continue to live as Christ's disciples is to use our time, service, and financial resources in and through the Church, the Body of the Living Christ.

“Where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.” Lk. 12:34

### 23.3 Sharing Card

Please tick one:



Expiry Date..../.....

Please debit my Bankcard/MasterCard/Visa Card Account

On the.....day of each month/quarter for


A term of .....years expiring on.....with the

Sum of \$.....I understand that this authority may be cancelled in

writing at my option.                      *Sharing God's Gifts*

Signature:.....Date:.....



Name:.....		Present Envelope Number		
Address.....		.....		
My old pledge was: \$      Weekly		Or \$      Each		
My new pledge will be: \$      Weekly		Or \$      Each		
Thus my pledge is: (Please Tick)	An Increase	The Same	A Reduction	A 'New' Pledge
Signature:.....Date:.....				
 <i>Sharing God's</i>				

## **23.4 Week 3 Homily – Sharing**

The Gospel passage about blind faith also relates to our call to Stewardship.

God our Father asks us to put our trust in Him rather than material possessions....to put Him first rather than to take care of our own needs and then give Him whatever might be left over. In our culture today, this may be the most difficult challenge that we face as Christians and by the same token, it may be the most rewarding.

Do you ever worry about money? How about the things that has brought you (cars, clothes, etc.) It seems that in our society, those who don't have money worry about how to get it, and those who do have money worry even more about how to keep it. Scripture teaches us and many Christians who practice Stewardship share with us, that the proper handling of money and material things requires only faith. With absolute trust in God's care for us, money never has to be a worry again.

The first step to this worry-free living is to acknowledge that what you have now and what you will receive tomorrow are because of God's goodness. The second step is to trust that God really will take care of you according to what is best (maybe not what you would wish for, but what is best). Do you trust God or money? It cannot be both. Putting your trust in God doesn't mean you can be idle or irresponsible with regard to your money. Prudent Stewardship means that you do your best to take care of what God has blessed you with by constantly seeking His will and grace.

The third step is to give out of gratitude a generous portion of your income as a sign of your trust in God and willingness to serve Him. My purpose though is not to tell you how much you should give. You should decide in good conscience whether this guideline is appropriate for you. Whatever you decide, be faithful to it.

In any case the sacrifice of giving of ourselves is far outweighed by the reward. When we practice giving in this way, we grow into an even closer relationship with God, resulting in a peace and joy beyond material measure.

In review, the three steps to worry-free finances are:

1. Recognise all that we have as gifts from God
2. Trust that God will care for you and your family if you just seek His will
3. Share what you have generously as Jesus taught us

My prayer for you is that, like Bartimaus, you will reach out to our Lord in faith, and like him, you will see the love that God has for you.

## **23.5 Week 3 – Bulletin Announcement**

### **Stewardship News**

#### **Parish EXPO**

Thank you to everyone who made the EXPO such a huge success last weekend. The ministries were well represented and the excellent morning and afternoon teas provided by the Stewardship Team were impossible to refuse.

The interest shown by all parishioners was very encouraging and we trust it will help you to determine how you will become more involved in parish life.

#### **Gift Reflection/Time & Service**

God blesses us all with skills. Now we are asked to return that blessing by sharing our skills and ourselves with God and our neighbours. Please devote some time this week, if you have not already done so, to gather your family together and consider your gifts and the Stewardship of your time and skill.

Please return your completed Gift Reflection/Time and Service sheets in the offertory collection at Mass next Sunday. If you have not received a Gift Reflection/Time and Service sheet please pick one up from the back of the Church.

#### **Sharing**

This week a letter will be available for collection after Mass regarding Stewardship of Sharing. Should anyone not attend Mass at this Church this weekend the letter will be mailed or delivered through the school.

As stewards, each of us is called to share our blessings according to our means. If we trust in God's love for us we will experience the joy of giving from our hearts. May God bless you for your generosity.

#### **Sharing Card**

Please plan to drop your Sharing Card into the offertory collection next week. Remember that our Lord cannot be outdone in generosity. "Give and it shall be given to you. For the measure you measure will be measured back to you." (Luke 6:38)

#### **Stewardship – A Summary**

- We are all called to be Disciples of Christ. This means that we are called to live a life based on the teachings of Jesus. With in this, we are called as Good Stewards to use the gifts of our time, our service and our income, which God has entrusted to us.
- Christian Stewardship helps us to understand that God is the ultimate giver of all the gifts we have.
- To give to God should be from the top, not from what may be left over.
- The Christian steward is one who receives God's gifts *gratefully*, cherishes and tends them in a *responsible* manner, *shares* them in justice and love with others, and *returns* them with increase to the Lord.

- There are then, four essential elements to stewardship: *gratitude, responsibility, generosity, and accountability*.
- Stewardship can never be reduced to occasional acts of charity or volunteer work. It is a way of life, the response of mature disciples to discover and develop their gifts.
- Stewardship is a life of total accountability and responsibility – acknowledging God as creator and owner of all material goods and resources.
- Stewardship bonds the spiritual with the physical dimension of life. It is a free commitment in faith to use all God’s gifts: the environment and its resources, products of the economy, time and talent, to support the value and dignity of all persons.
- Stewardship is a gradual conversion of heart, mind, and values. We become more responsible and accountable managers of all that we are given.
- Stewardship is what we do after we say we believe. It is our *faith in action!*
- Stewardship is “giving because we need to give” in gratitude for what we have been given, not “giving to a need” because we feel obligated.
- Stewardship asks us to assess our gifts and then to make a conscious decision as to how much and what part of these gifts we will return to God by giving to those in need and our Church.
- Stewardship brings peace of mind and balance to the good steward’s lifestyle, since he or she is freed from an over-attachment to the things of the world.
- A stewardship lifestyle is counter-cultural to our materialistic, individualistic society. We are called to be caretakers, not owners, of our time, talents, and resources. We receive gratefully, share lovingly, live responsibly and possess sensibly.

### **Stewardship Prayer**

Generous and loving God,  
 You call us to be disciples of your Son Jesus  
 and good stewards of all your many gifts.

Open our minds and hearts to a greater awareness  
 and deeper appreciation of your countless blessings.

Transform us through the power of Your Spirit  
 to nurture a stewardship way of life marked by faith-filled  
 prayer, service to our neighbour and generous sharing.

Teach us to be faithful servants of your gifts.

With Mary's help, may we return ten-fold the gifts entrusted to us.

We pray through Christ, our Lord. Amen

## **23.6 Week 3 – Pulpit Announcements**

### **Stewardship**

#### **Parish EXPO**

Thank you to everyone who made the EXPO such a huge success last weekend. The ministries were well represented and the excellent morning and afternoon teas provided by the Stewardship Team were impossible to refuse.

The interest shown by all parishioners was very encouraging and we trust it will help you to determine how you will become more involved in parish life.

#### **Gift Reflection/Time and Service**

Please remember to review the list of parish organisations and activities you received last weekend and consider the information you received at the Parish EXPO. If you have already completed and returned your sheet thank you very much. However, if you have not done so we look forward to receiving it on the offertory collection next weekend. Once all sheets have been returned we will pass them on to the ministries and you will be contacted by a ministry leader to discuss your involvement. Thank you for your generosity.

#### **Sharing**

You will receive a letter as you leave the Church on the Stewardship of Sharing. Please review it prayerfully. Responding out of true generosity will reward you with a peace and joy that cannot be explained. It can only be experienced.

#### **Sharing Card**

Please plan to drop your Sharing Card into the offertory collection next weekend. Remember that our Lord cannot be outdone in generosity. "Give and it shall be given to you. For the measure you measure will be measured back to you." (Luke 6:38)

## **23.7 Week 3 – Prayers of the Faithful**

### **Each Week – Prayer of the Faithful**

#### **Last Prayer of the Faithful Before the Collection**

Lord God, we thank you for the gifts, talents and abilities you have given each of us. These are represented by the contributions we are about to collect and offer at the altar. May these gifts enable us more effectively to carry out the mission of our parish. For this we pray to the Lord.

### **Week 3 - Prayer of the Faithful**

Lord, grant us the ability to honestly evaluate our lifestyle that it might reflect a desire to walk closer with you, we pray to the Lord.

## **24 Week 4 Activities**

### ***24.1 Week 4 – Bulletin Announcement***

#### **Stewardship News**

Through Stewardship, we have an opportunity to express our own faith in God in a way more meaningful than words. Through our offerings, we help ourselves as well as our brothers and sisters in the mission of the Church, thus doing the Lord's will.

#### **Gift Reflection/Time & Service and Sharing Cards**

It will soon be necessary to contact those parishioners who have not yet returned their time, service and/or sharing cards so please do so by next Sunday if possible.

#### **Envelopes**

Please remember to collect your new set of envelopes from the back of the Church, they are in order so should not be too hard to find.

#### **Stewardship Prayer**

Generous and loving God,  
You call us to be disciples of your Son Jesus  
and good stewards of all your many gifts.

Open our minds and hearts to a greater awareness  
and deeper appreciation of your countless blessings.

Transform us through the power of Your Spirit  
to nurture a stewardship way of life marked by faith-filled  
prayer, service to our neighbour and generous sharing.

Teach us to be faithful servants of your gifts.  
With Mary's help, may we return ten-fold the gifts  
entrusted to us.

We pray through Christ, our Lord. Amen

### ***24.2 Week 4 – Pulpit Announcements***

#### **Stewardship**

Through Stewardship, we have an opportunity to express our own faith in God in a way more meaningful than words. Through our offerings, we help ourselves as well as our brothers and sisters in the mission of the church, thus doing the Lord's will.

## **Time, Service and Income Sharing Cards**

So that we do not have to contact you would you please ensure you time, service and sharing cards are returned by next Sunday. Thank you.

## **Envelopes**

Please remember to collect your new set of envelopes from the back of the Church, they are in order so should not be too hard to find.

## ***24.3 Week 4 – Prayers of the Faithful***

### **Each Week – Prayer of the Faithful**

#### **Last Prayer of the Faithful Before the Collection**

Lord God, we thank you for the gifts, talents and abilities you have given each of us. These are represented by the contributions we are about to collect and offer at the altar. May these gifts enable us more effectively to carry out the mission of our parish. For this we pray to the Lord.

### **Week 4 – Prayer of the Faithful**

For all parishioners and community supporters contributing to our parish's fiscal needs, may their gifts be an expression of the gifts God has given them, let us pray to the Lord.

## 25 Follow-up Activities

### 25.1 Stewardship Follow-up Time Line

ACTIVITIES	WEEK 5 DATES: ____ ____	WEEK 6 DATES: ____ ____	WEEK 7 DATES: ____ ____
Mailings	Final Thank You Letter Final Follow-up Letter		
Bulletin Announcements	Thanks & Results	Thanks	Reminder – never too late
Pulpit Announcement	Thanks & Results	Thanks	
Time/Service Coordinator	Volunteers telephoned		Letters as Appropriate

## 26 Week 5 Follow-up Activities

### 26.1 Week 5 – Bulletin Announcement

#### Stewardship News

Thank you to everyone who has been involved in the introduction of Stewardship to our Parish and thank you to all our parishioners for your thoughtful commitment of time, service and income. Your efforts are helping to build the Kingdom of God in our community. (See Stewardship Results below)

Please keep an eye out in the bulletin for further Stewardship initiatives in the weeks and months ahead. Remember Stewardship is a way of life and we will be living it as a Parish all year round.

#### Stewardship Results

The following results have been achieved by the Parish:

- Time and Service
  - Numbers involved in ministries:      Previously              Now
- Income Sharing
  - Number of envelope contributors:      Previously              Now
  - Value of contributions:                      Previously              Now

## **Stewardship Corner**

Do we ever take the initiative to give of ourselves, or do we always wait to be asked?

### **Stewardship Prayer**

Generous and loving God,  
You call us to be disciples of your Son Jesus  
and good stewards of all your many gifts.

Open our minds and hearts to a greater awareness  
and deeper appreciation of your countless blessings.

Transform us through the power of Your Spirit  
to nurture a stewardship way of life marked by faith-filled  
prayer, service to our neighbour and generous sharing.

Teach us to be faithful servants of your gifts.  
With Mary's help, may we return ten-fold the gifts  
entrusted to us.  
We pray through Christ, our Lord. Amen

## **26.2 Thank You Letter for Completing a Gift Reflection/Time & Service/Sharing Card**

### **26.2.1 Sample of Stewardship Letter - 1**

Mr and Mrs Fred Parishioner  
487 Pitt Street  
Sydney NSW 2000

Dear Fred and Betty,

Thank you for generously responding to the introduction of Stewardship in our parish. Through your thoughtful commitment of time, service or income sharing, you are helping to build the Kingdom of God in our community.

Living our faith is a great challenge in today's world. As Christian stewards of God's many gifts to us, we are called to share those gifts with others. Through your generosity, you have heard that call.

Thank you for your planned contribution of \$ per week or \$ per year. Your strong financial commitment to our parish is of great assistance in planning responsibly for the future.

Your investment in our faith community will pay lasting dividends in the hearts of those our parish serves and you will be rewarded many times over for your generosity.

It takes many hands to build the Kingdom of God. Thank you for joining in this vital work. May God bless you (and your family) for your generosity.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Father

### **26.2.2 Sample of Stewardship Letter - 2**

Mr and Mrs Fred Parishioner  
487 Pitt Street  
Sydney NSW 2000

Dear Fred and Betty,

I want to thank you for your generous response to Stewardship. More than (number) households responded with by returning their Gift Reflection/Time and Service sheets. This is an excellent response.

It has been encouraging to see the number of people who responded to our Time and Service opportunities. I hope you are contacted soon and invited to share your gifts. If you are not contacted, please let me know!

You have responded that you will contribute \$ for the year. This indicates your strong financial commitment to our parish, and it helps our Finance Committee and me put together a responsible budget for our parish needs. I know I can count on you to do your best to live up to your financial commitment.

Again, thank you for your response to our Stewardship process. I hope it has brought you great joy to give thanks for what you have been given by sharing with others.

Sincerely in Christ

Father

### ***26.3 Follow-up Letter – Gift Reflection/Time & Service/Sharing Cards not Returned***

Mr and Mrs Fred Parishioner  
487 Pitt Street  
Sydney NSW 2000

Dear Fred and Betty,

Recently I witnessed and shared the joy of all the members of our parish family who committed themselves to returning to God, in gratitude, a first portion of the gifts God will bestow on them during the next year. Sacrifices like these have made possible all the work of our parish over the years.

I am writing to those who did not return their Gift Reflection/Time & Service sheets and/or their income sharing cards, because this process allows us to plan in advance our parish ministries for the year ahead.

More importantly, I sincerely believe this commitment serves as a vehicle of faith through which we can more fully appreciate our daily life. I want you to share the joy and peace of those who intend to be stewards of God's many blessings.

Please take a few minutes to re-examine the brochures we provided during the programme, and then indicate your decision about Stewardship on the Gift Reflection/Time & Service sheet and the income-sharing card. You can return them to the parish office, or place them in the offertory collection at Mass this weekend. If you need replacement copies of the sheet/card or brochures, or if there is anything I can do to make your participation possible, please call or write to the parish office.

Please join with all of us who have decided to return to our Lord the first fruits of His generous blessings. It can change your life.

Sincerely and Gratefully in Christ Jesus,

Father

#### ***26.4 Follow-up Letter Where New Commitment Not Made but is Existing Contributor***

Mr & Mrs. Fred Parishioner  
487 Pitt Street  
Sydney NSW 2000

Dear Fred and Betty,

Recently I witnessed and shared the joy of all the members of our parish family who re-committed themselves to returning to God, in gratitude, a first portion of the gifts He will bestow on them during the next year. As you are no doubt aware sacrifices like these have made possible all the work of our parish over the years.

I am writing to those who did not return their Gift Reflection/Time & Service Sheets and/or their Income Sharing Cards, because this process allows us to better plan our parish ministries for the year ahead.

While you have demonstrated that you live your life as a generous steward of God's many gifts by your support of the parish, we would be grateful if you could take a few minutes to re-examine the brochures we provided during the programme and then indicate your decision about Stewardship on the Gift Reflection/Time & Service sheet and the Income Sharing Card. You can return them to the parish office, or place them in the offertory collection at Mass this weekend.

Should you prefer to maintain your existing commitments to the parish ministries and/or planned giving (your existing pledge is \$ per week or \$ per year) without completing the abovementioned forms you need take

no further action as we will note parish records accordingly. However, if you wish to make a change, simply telephone the parish office for assistance.

Sincerely and Gratefully in Christ Jesus,

Father

## **26.5 Week 5 – Pulpit Announcements**

### **Stewardship**

Thank you to everyone who has been involved in the introduction of Stewardship to our Parish and thank you to all our parishioners for your thoughtful commitment of time, service and income. Your efforts are helping to build the Kingdom of God in our community. (See Stewardship Results below)

Please keep an eye out in the bulletin for further Stewardship initiatives in the weeks and months ahead. Remember Stewardship is a way of life and we will be living it as a Parish all year round.

### **Stewardship Results**

The following results have been achieved by the Parish:

- Time and Service
  - Numbers involved in ministries:      Previously                      Now
- Income Sharing
  - Number of envelope contributors:      Previously                      Now
  - Value of contributions:                      Previously                      Now

### **Stewardship Team**

A very special thank you must go to the Stewardship Team for the many hours of their time they gave back to God to ensure the success of this programme. I am looking forward to an exciting year where Stewardship is a way of life.

## **27 Week 6 Follow-up Activities**

### **27.1 Week 6 – Bulletin Announcement**

#### **Stewardship News**

The many members of God’s family that will benefit from your generosity may never have an opportunity to extend their personal thanks to you. Through your sacrifices, the ministries of our parish will reveal to each of us the goodness of the Lord, for which we are truly grateful. Thank you

## **Stewardship Prayer**

Generous and loving God,  
You call us to be disciples of your Son Jesus  
and good stewards of all your many gifts.  
Open our minds and hearts to a greater awareness  
and deeper appreciation of your countless blessings.

Transform us through the power of Your Spirit  
to nurture a stewardship way of life marked by faith-filled  
prayer, service to our neighbour and generous sharing.

Teach us to be faithful servants of your gifts.  
With Mary's help, may we return ten-fold the gifts  
entrusted to us.

We pray through Christ, our Lord. Amen

## **28 Week 7 Follow-up Activities**

### ***28.1 Week 7 – Bulletin Announcement***

#### **Stewardship News**

It is never too late to make a commitment to be a good steward of your blessings of time, service and income. If you have not taken the opportunity to return your time, service and income sharing cards, please do so as soon as possible.

#### **Stewardship Prayer**

Generous and loving God,  
You call us to be disciples of your Son Jesus  
and good stewards of all your many gifts.

Open our minds and hearts to a greater awareness  
and deeper appreciation of your countless blessings.

Transform us through the power of Your Spirit  
to nurture a stewardship way of life marked by faith-filled  
prayer, service to our neighbour and generous sharing.

Teach us to be faithful servants of your gifts.  
With Mary's help, may we return ten-fold the gifts  
entrusted to us.

We pray through Christ, our Lord. Amen