

## 1 STEWARDSHIP A Disciple's Response

*Some ideas and questions from the United States Bishop's Pastoral Letter on Stewardship and the disciple for your prayerful consideration during Advent.*

Who is a Christian Steward?

*It is one who receives God's gifts gratefully, cherishes and tends them in a responsible and accountable manner, shares them in justice and love with all, and returns them with increase to the Lord.*

It is essentially a key dimension of our call to be a disciple of Jesus . For everyone who responds to the Lord's invitation "Come follow me" stewardship is not an optional extra but an obligation—a key part of our response. It holds each and everyone of us accountable to God for our personal care of the universe. In the judgement, God will have the right to ask "what did you do with my world?"

Our Christian stewardship therefore applies to everything, our personal talents, abilities and wealth. It applies to the care of the environment at all levels, all natural resources, the economic order, governmental affairs and even outer space. The true disciple cannot be indifferent to anything important in God's world.

Our vocation is essentially a call to be a disciple of Jesus . Yet vocation often sounds so dull but it is not dull. *It is the work that you are called to in this world—the thing you are called to spend your life doing.* Your discipleship and mine begins with our baptismal calling. Therefore, as we begin this Advent reflection, we are invited to deepen our understanding of our own vocation. "You did not choose me," says the Lord, "No I chose you and I commissioned you to go out and to bear fruit—fruit that will last." So a key part of living stewardship is the call for each of us to evangelize—to share with others the Good News of the Lord.

It is just as the Second Vatican Council said of *all Christians*. They *are bound to show forth, by the example of their lives and by the witness of their speech that new life of faith which begins in baptism and is strengthened by the power of the Holy Spirit in Confirmation (Ad Gentes 11).*

That Spirit is alive and active in our world and we need to learn to read the signs of the Spirit's presence. Being a disciple cannot be lived in a vacuum. We live in a world and in our parishes. We therefore need to accept responsibility for them not only with our finances but also with our personal service. *It is only by living as generous stewards of these—our local Christian communities—can Catholics hope to make them vital sources of faith filled Christian dynamism that they are meant to be.*

### Some questions for reflection and discussion

Do you believe God has chosen and called you to be a disciple?

If you believe you have been called, what human, personal experiences have re-inforced you faith in the call?

What are some of the reasons you might hesitate to respond to the Lord's call?

If you were preaching a sermon on Stewardship, which of Jesus' parables would you use? Why?

Realistically, what can a good steward expect from God?