

6 STEWARDSHIP *Some key points*

As we come to the feast of the Lord's Baptism and the end of the Christmas season, we look at some final points from the United States Bishop's Pastoral Letter on the disciple and Stewardship. Think about them prayerfully as today we make our commitment of our time, talent and treasure in our parish.

Stewardship—A faith response

The Bishops make three key points on how to make stewardship successful:

- 1 Stewardship must be a personal commitment as well as a priority for our parish.
- 2 Everyone, Leaders, Pastoral and Finance Council members, Teams and all parishioners are called to see the concept of stewardship as a faith response.
- 3 All our programs and activities (including our fundraising activities) must be replaced as necessary with programs that incorporate stewardship principles and high professional standards.

So how do we do it?

We invited to make stewardship needs a top priority so that we help people understand what it means to follow Jesus in an affluent , consumer society. To bring this about all leaders in the parish, including the clergy, need to have a sense of commitment to the idea and the practice.

All of us also require a conversion of heart to make stewardship a way of life for ourselves and for our parish. When this happens, it is often observed that parish change and change for the better—not only financially but in terms of our energy and commitment.

And just what should I give?

All of us who take the matter seriously should consider carefully the gifts we have received from God and then make a decision. The bishops make the point that when we just focus on increasing the collection we miss the great connection between stewardship as a way of life and the gifts of time, talent and treasure that individuals freely give to God out of gratitude for the blessings they have received. Stewardship should emphasise all aspects of our lives.

And finally on this feast of the Baptism of the Lord we recall Paul's words to the Philippians:

*I give thanks to God each time I think of you
and when I pray for you I pray with joy
Because of your partnership for the gospel
from the first day until now.
I am confident of this,
that the one who began a good work in you
will continue to complete it until the day of Jesus.*

May it be true for all of us gathered here on this feast of the Lord's baptism.