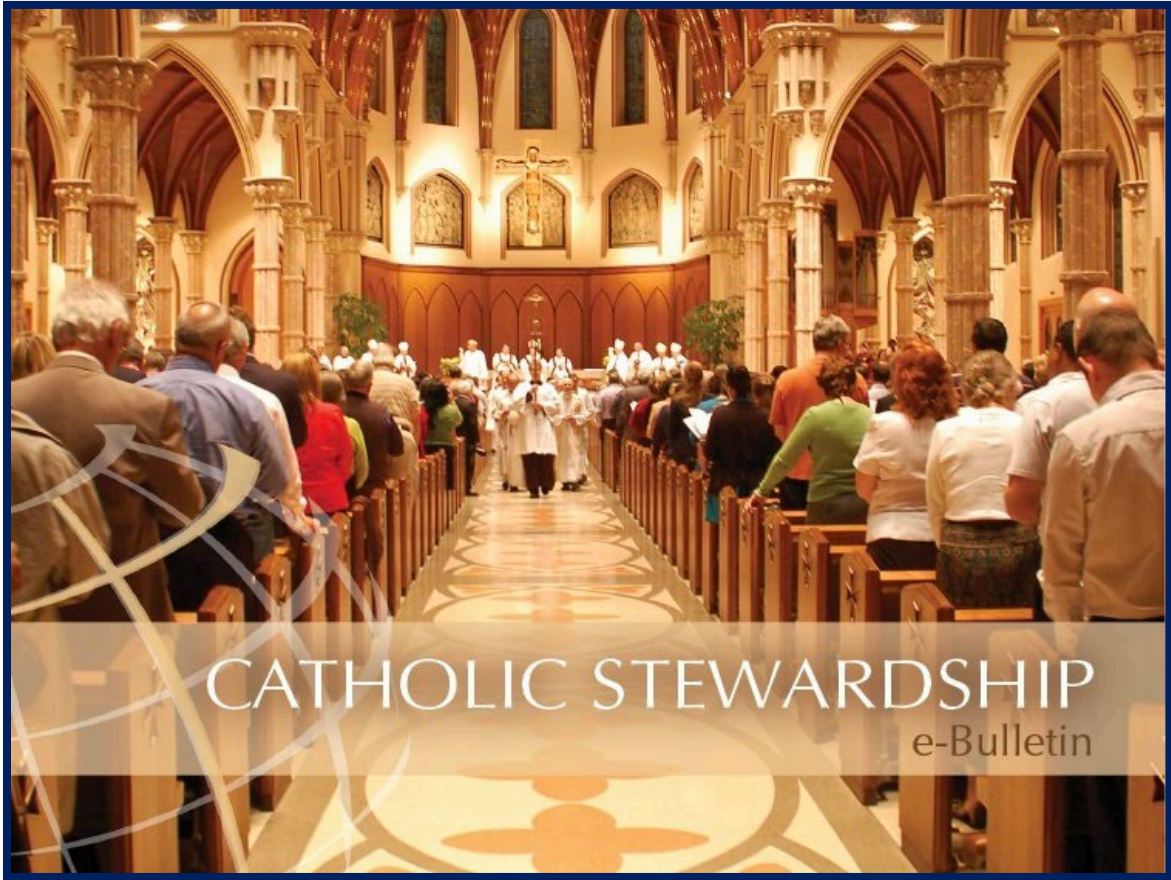




RamTell E-Newsletter
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Catholic Stewardship

Catholic stewards respond to the profound moral imperative to take care of and share generously all God's gifts (cf. Mt 25:14–30, the parable of the talents). By cultivating and sharing their gifts for the greater good of humankind, Catholic stewards recognize all their talents and possessions as manifestations of God's generosity rather than as products of their own efforts. They willingly accept the duty to be responsible stewards of all God's gifts—material and spiritual.

What are the main elements of Christian stewardship?

Catholic stewards are disciples of Jesus Christ who respond to his personal invitation to follow him by committing themselves to lifestyles characterized by:

Gratitude — Accepting all God's gifts (material and spiritual) with appreciation and humility. Gratitude is central to stewardship; recent studies have shown that focusing on gratitude is very beneficial to a person's mental health.

Accountability — Recognizing that as Christian stewards, each of us is accountable for cultivating and using God's gifts in a selfless, responsible, and accountable manner.

Generosity — Sharing God's gifts with others, especially the poor and vulnerable. Self-giving is the way of Jesus as embodied in the lives of His Blessed Mother Mary and all the Saints.

Returning God's gifts to the Lord with increase — Taking the gifts and talents they have been given and investing them for growth. Being productive and entrepreneurial for the betterment of others.

Catholic stewards understand that they do not own anything in an absolute sense but receive everything from a good and generous God who is the original author and ultimate owner of all things visible and invisible. Stewards serve as managers (custodians, caretakers, or guardians) of all the gifts God gives them. They accept the responsibility to share generously with others what has been generously given to them.

In their 1992 pastoral letter, *Stewardship: A Disciple's Response*, the Catholic bishops of the United States describe stewardship as "a practical form of spirituality." The faithful Christian steward incorporates the basic elements of Catholic spirituality into his or her daily life, striving to live a life of responsible and generous sharing.

Saint Meinrad Stewardship Formation



Although the ministry of priests is primarily spiritual (prayer, liturgy, sacraments, and counseling), the administrative and financial responsibilities

of a priest's daily life and work are important, and they require an appreciation for the material and temporal dimensions of human life. Like all baptized Catholics, priests are called to steward their gifts and to be accountable for the development and use of everything God has given them.

At Saint Meinrad Seminary and School of Theology in southern Indiana, students are given a comprehensive overview of Catholic stewardship (including mission advancement, the spirituality of giving, professional fundraising practices, pastoral planning, and leadership strategies within the context of parish and diocesan ministry). Here are some of the highlights of Saint Meinrad's stewardship formation:

Principles and Theological Foundations

Stewardship recognizes all is a gift from God, emphasizing gratitude, accountability, and generosity. It is rooted in scriptural covenants, parables, and the Acts of the Apostles,

highlighting the importance of spiritual thanksgiving, vocation, and responsible management of resources.

Spiritual Leadership and Resource Development

Pastors serve as spiritual fathers, focusing on personal attitude, generosity, and roles in resource development. Parish fundraising includes campaigns, endowments, and planned gifts, supported by councils, communication, and transparency to foster a culture of giving.

Person, Relationships, and Resources

Stewardship involves managing personal gifts, relationships with God and others, and resources such as money, natural assets, and talents. It underscores the importance of responsible use and development of these gifts within the community for the Kingdom of God.

Development and Planning Strategies

Development involves assessing parish realities, setting goals, cultivating community, and growing resources. Planning includes conducting analysis, creating strategic and pastoral plans, and

engaging various tools like establishing volunteer groups or committees, conducting listening sessions, and using diocesan resources over different time periods.

Parish Life and Administrative Responsibilities

Parish responsibilities include managing finances, revenue, staff, ministries, and daily operations. Effective leadership and management of these areas is essential for sustaining parish activities and fulfilling mission objectives.

Diocesan Revenue and Fundraising

Diocesan fundraising efforts encompass annual appeals, capital campaigns, and special collections. Best practices involve strategic activities, follow-up, and celebrations to

meet financial goals and support diocesan missions.

Parish Capital Campaigns and Implementation

Planning includes feasibility studies and leadership recruitment. Campaigns are executed in quiet and public phases, with ongoing stewardship, progress reports, and pledge fulfillment to ensure success.

Advancing Mission through Leadership and Education

Mission advancement calls for purposeful leadership, including pastoral letters, management skills, and resources. It emphasizes building the Kingdom of God by leading others to Christ and fostering a culture of stewardship and generosity.



RamTell, Inc. is proud to support the education and spiritual formation of future priests and of the lay women and men who will be the pastoral leaders of the future. We strongly support efforts to teach the spirituality of stewardship and to help Church leaders be effective leaders in their parishes and dioceses. For more information, including past issues of this newsletter, visit www.ramtell.org.