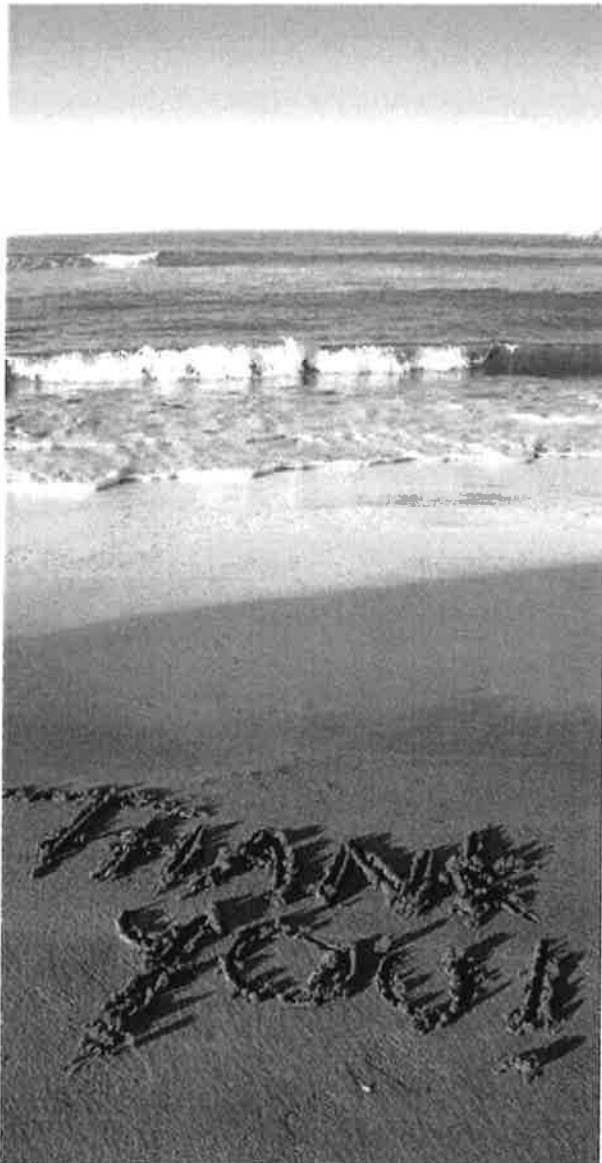




Gratitude: A Virtue Which Unlocks Fullness of Life

This is the third in a 12-part series of spiritual reflections by ICSC member, Dan Potvin, on a renewed vision for stewardship formation in the Archdiocese of Winnipeg, Canada. Dan is the Director of Stewardship for the Archdiocese of Winnipeg.



Each of us has so much to be grateful for. The challenge in our society is to step outside of our own little worlds from time to time, to see just how abundantly blessed we are. When we get stuck in our own little worlds, comparing ourselves to what we see around us, and in the media, we are in a very dangerous place. By remaining in this cocoon, we run the risk of being perpetually dissatisfied and un-grateful. The virtue of gratitude has the power to change the way we think about who we are, and all that we possess. *"Gratitude unlocks the fullness of life. It turns what we have into enough, and more."* (Melody Beattie) Good stewards develop the virtue of gratitude, as with all virtue, through their daily habits. The habit of being grateful takes some effort on our part – we must be aware of what we think about every day. When you think about it, you are abundantly blessed compared to so many in the world who have so little.

An attitude of gratitude is central to the stewardship way of life.

You will possess this virtue when you have the ability to be grateful, even when you don't feel like it. In fact, next time you feel like complaining about something, think of something you are grateful for, and any negative thinking will vanish. That's the power of gratitude. Having developed a daily disposition of gratitude, the question then becomes to whom are you grateful? St. Paul gives us some direction here, "Didn't God give you everything you have? Well, then how can you boast, as if what you have were not a gift?" (1 Corinthians 4:7) At the heart of authentic stewardship, you will always find an overwhelming sense of gratitude to God. Obligation and duty do motivate the Christian Steward to a certain degree; it is the virtue of gratitude that moves us into the realm of genuine and joyful generosity. An attitude of gratitude is central to the stewardship way of life. Moreover, gratitude is the one virtue we must possess to hold all the others. *"Gratitude is not only the greatest of virtues, but the parent of all others."* Cicero