

## Catholic Stewardship

Todd and Johna Clancy

Good afternoon/morning. I am Todd Clancy and this is my lovely wife Johna and we would like to thank the Stewardship Committee and Father Secora for giving us the opportunity to talk with you about stewardship. We are the proud parents of three children, Katlin, Patrick, and Logan.

**In 2000, at the Prayer Vigil for World Youth Day, Blessed John Paul II said, "It is Jesus who stirs in you the desire to do something great with your lives, the will to follow an ideal, the refusal to allow yourselves to be ground down by mediocrity, the courage to commit yourselves humbly and patiently to improving yourselves and society, making the world more human and more fraternal". We believe this quote highlights many of things that are required of a good steward.**

Stewardship can be summarized and practiced in three ways. They are: prayer, time and talent, and treasure.

We have been involved in Life Teen here at our parish since it began four years ago. At one of the early training sessions we were asked to summarize our prayer life. I must admit that I was more than a little embarrassed when I looked closely at how small a part that prayer played in my life. I knew that it was a larger part of Johna's life as she been a part of the Eucharist Adoration group for over ten years. I figured since she was a cradle Catholic that prayer would always be more important to her. I will admit that my prayer life could still be better but since we have made a decision to be more involved and active as Catholics, my prayer life is improving and bringing me closer to God.

Prayer is a way that all of you can participate in stewardship and it is the most important item in developing a personal relationship with Jesus. Your prayers give strength and hope throughout the world. Your prayers allow God to enter into your life. There is nothing more reassuring to me than to hear someone say, "I'll pray for you". St. Ignatius of Loyola often prayed: "Dearest Lord, teach me to be generous; Teach me to serve thee as thou deservest: To give and not to count the cost, To fight and not seek for rest, To labour and not to seek reward, Save that of knowing that I do thy will."

The second leg of stewardship is time and talent. God has blessed his Church with a variety of people who possess a variety of talents. You need to discern where your talents lie and how best to use them. I would like to tell you a story about how donating my time has enriched and rewarded me. This summer I was a chaperone for Life Teen Leadership Conference in Atchison, Kansas. The conference was held at Benedictine College, home of St. Benedict's Abbey and approximately fifty monks. The Rule of St. Benedict emphasizes hospitality and as part of that hospitality, the monks invited the kids to join them in the Abbey for morning prayers at six o'clock. I challenged the kids to attend at least one morning during the week. Thursday morning, seven of our nine joined me for morning prayer. I was excited to say the least. Thursday was a long, busy day for us at the conference and it was after midnight before we headed for bed. I told the kids that I would meet them at ten till six the next morning if anyone was interested. I did not expect to have much company the next morning. The next morning at five fifty-five, I see Lane Bowden running up the hill to join me. He told me that he did not get to bed until after 12:30 last night. He also said that before he went to bed, he told God that he wasn't going to set his alarm and if God

wanted to him pray with the monks, God would have to wake him up. Needless to say, my walk to the Abbey that morning was filled with hope and faith.

We have been rewarded for every second of time that we have given. We have purposely gotten involved with areas that were outside of our comfort zone. We have gotten to know many of you from our involvement in our Church and all of you have enriched our lives in ways too numerous to count. This type of stewardship extends outside of our church as well. Volunteering at Food at First, leading service trips, chaperoning youth trips are all examples of ways your time and your talent has enriched our community and the world.

The final leg of stewardship is treasure. I would like to relate a story about how money donated by a few people turned into a success that has benefited hundreds of people. Around eight years ago, we were walking across the parking lot of St. Cecilia and saw Amy Frankl. Amy waved us over and explained that some families were going to start a fundraiser to benefit the educational programs at St. Cecilia. They were asking thirty people to donate \$100 as seed money to offset expenses. We were fortunate enough at that time to be able to donate and did so happily. Little did we know that we would still be volunteering at the St. Cecilia Gala all these years later. That contribution by a small group of people has contributed over \$1,000,000 to the educational endowment and programs at St. Cecilia. These moneys have been used by the school, youth ministry and adult education programs and made a positive impact on hundreds of lives in our parish.

We would ask that all of you spend some time in prayer and contribute whatever you can. Pope Francis said in a June 7th press release, "Poverty in the world is a scandal. In a world where there is so much wealth, so many resources to feed everyone, it is unfathomable that there are so many hungry children, that there are so many children without an education, so many poor persons. Poverty today is a cry. We all have to think if we can become a little poorer, all of us have to do this. How can I become a little poorer in order to be more like Jesus, who was the poor Teacher?"

**In closing, we would like to remind you to be open to the call, whatever it may be. Remember that what you receive will greatly offset whatever you are able to give. Do not forget the words of Blessed John Paul II, "*It is Jesus who stirs in you the desire to do something great with your lives, the will to follow an ideal, the refusal to allow yourselves to be ground down by mediocrity, the courage to commit yourselves humbly and patiently to improving yourselves and society, making the world more human and more fraternal*". Thank you very much.**