

Climbing the Ladder of Stewardship

Last month our Parish Council heard a very good presentation on stewardship. I thought the following *Ladder of Stewardship* was good enough to share with you. Level 1 is the lowest level of giving, and 6 is the highest. Where are you? Where do you think our parish is as a whole?

1. Guilt: Give to avoid embarrassment or punishment.
2. Reward: Give if you get something back.
3. Approval: Give if someone else will notice.
4. Need: Give because someone else really needs it.
5. Duty: Give out of honor, duty, sacrifice.
6. Gratitude: Give out of joy and thanksgiving.

The first three are poor levels of motivation for giving, but often practiced. *Guilt-giving* relieves the social pressure and embarrassment felt if others found out you weren't giving. If the boss saw you didn't contribute to the office collection, he wouldn't like it, and might subtly punish you. *Reward-giving* is buying a raffle ticket because you might win. Buy a beer at the festival, and you help the church and get a beer. *Approval-giving* wants to be noticed and thanked. You get your name on the wall or in the book. It's vainglory or pride.

The last three are praiseworthy motivations and reasons for giving. *Need-giving* means I see a need and respond. I am happy to help, but I have to see the need first and be convinced of its worth. *Duty-giving* might not see any need, but responds out of duty. I belong, so I ought to give. I take, so I should give. Giving until it hurts makes the gift a sacrifice. It's Christ-like, because sacrifice is involved. *Gratitude-giving* simply means I give out of gratitude for my own blessings, not because of any other reason like duty or need. I give because I'm happy, and it makes me happier to give. This is the motivation for most of our giving at Christmas, because I want to make someone else happy, and it makes me happy to give you a gift.

November is Stewardship Month and I appeal to you on level 4. Your parish really needs you and the gifts of time, talent, and treasure that you bring.

In the spring of 2005 or '06, the archdiocese would like to send us a young associate pastor to share in the heavy workload of our large parish—Masses, weddings, funerals, sick calls, meetings, classes with youth—and to increase the vitality of our parish with the ministry of another priest.

Consequently, our stewardship goal is to increase envelope contributions by 7.5 %, or \$75,000. Please watch for your stewardship materials in the mail this month. December 12th will be Stewardship Commitment Weekend.

Father Tom Eichenberger

-Written for the St. Francis Borgia parish bulletin, November 7, 2004.