

Stewardship

Keeping Them in the Game

I was poverty stricken in this Monopoly game! Meanwhile, my grandson became super wealthy as we played together. Daniel, 14, sped around the board buying properties. Andrew, 11, quickly bought three expensive monopolies with hotels. I kept going to jail, landing on Chance or Community Chest, paying lots of taxes, as well as rent on the many properties the boys owned. But I wasn't bankrupt! Why? Their mother whispered in my ear, "They love you so much they want to keep you in the game."

How? Daniel gave me "unlimited immunity" on one of his monopolies. Sometimes they quickly took their turns so they "didn't see" my token land at their hotel and couldn't charge me. "Just pay \$10.00," they frequently said, when I actually owed hundreds. As my losses increased so did their gifts to me.

The gift of hope

Eventually, I owned two of the three "red" properties. Now Andrew said, "Here, Grandma, take this." He wanted to give me the third "red" property so I'd have a monopoly. "You need hope!" he said with serious conviction. His insight was touchingly true.



The game of monopoly has corollaries in life. This particular game seemed more about grace than hard-nosed business. I did not earn my grandsons' loving gifts. In life, we do not earn God's grace or the hope it brings.

Saint Paul wrote to the Corinthians about faith, hope, and charity (also translated, love). In life, our charitable gifts echo God's grace to us. *As our faith, time, talents and treasures are lovingly shared with others, we keep them "in the game" and bring them the gift of hope.* 

God's Economy

Several years ago, it was common to read the words, "Give until it hurts." Later it became common to read, "Give until you feel good."

Jesus suggested that we simply give without any purpose other than the sharing of a portion of what God has allowed us to have. "When you give alms," said our Lord, "do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, so that your alms may be in secret."

Untold blessings

The sincere giver does not need public recognition, headlines recording the story, and so forth. Those who give willingly and freely discover that there are untold blessings in the sheer act of giving. In God's economy, unheralded gifts, "alms given in secret" (our Lord's words) result in secret rewards that come to the giver. It is a matter between God and the one who gives. 

Stewardship of our talents means more than merely performing our talent for the glory of God. What if one would be willing to carry their stewardship one step further and teach others who have never known the joy of discovering the talent they may have hidden inside.



Pastor John's musing...



There is no typical volunteer. People who donate their time are as varied as the jobs they do.

At 71, Ed Porter of Newark, N.J. discovered that a leisurely retirement wasn't for him. At his wife's suggestion, Porter began volunteering at St. Mary's Hospital in nearby Orange, updating their maintenance records.

Seven years later, Porter said, "I get a lot out of my work at St. Mary's, like the personal satisfaction of having a place to go, people to speak to and something useful to do. It keeps me young."

By way of contrast, Trevor Ferrell was only 11 when he made national headlines for helping the homeless. Moved by the plight of homeless people, he saw on a television news report, Trevor took his own pillow and an extra blanket and persuaded his father to drive him to downtown Philadelphia, where he handed the bedding to a man sleeping on a grate.

What began as a grassroots effort to help street people, ended with the founding of Trevor's Place, a Philadelphia shelter for the homeless.

You're never too old to be a volunteer, and it's never too late or too early to start. Begin by seeing what you can do for your own church. 

*Are you an active member -
The kind that would be missed?
Or are you just contented
That your name is on the list?*

*Do you attend the meetings
And mingle with the flock?
Or do you stay at home
And criticize and knock?*

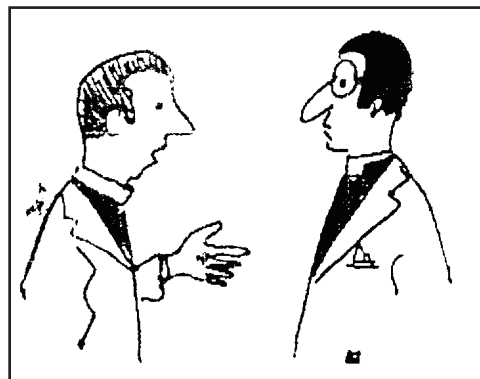
*Do you take an active part
To help the work along?
Or are you satisfied to be
Of those that just belong?*

*Do you ever voluntarily
Help at the guiding stick?
Or leave the work to just a few
And talk about the clique?*

*Come out to meetings often
And help with hands and heart.
Don't be just an active member,
But take an active part!*

*Think this over, member,
You know right from wrong;
Are you an active member,
Or do you just belong?*

*This applies from day to day
To everything you cherish -
To God and faith and prayer,
To your home and parish.*



"I'll have to admit, Bishop, that every time I preach about Hell ... the offering increases substantially."

The question for the committed believer is not, "Will I be God's steward?" Rather, we must ask, "What kind of steward will I be?" The Lord has called the members of his household to be the faithful and wise stewards. Let's grow in our Christian stewardship.

Good for the Geese...

Recently, as fall arrived, the air began to cool, leaves started falling from trees, and high overhead geese began honking. Looking up, you could often see that they were flying south in the famous v-shaped formation.



But why do they fly in that pattern? Scientists believe that they do it to help each other. When one bird flies at the tip of the v, it cuts air resistance to those flying behind it. It's harder work for the leader to fly in this position, but easier for its followers.

Of course, it would be difficult for one goose to be the leader over a migration that might be many hundreds of miles long. However, geese take turns, so that no one is pushed too hard.

Every congregation has its leaders; hard-working men and women who organize activities such as a church school or a Thanksgiving food drive. But because what they do is often time-consuming, it's unfair to sit back while the same people work so hard year after year.

Why not take the lead yourself in some major church project this year? After all, what's good for the geese (in this case) should be good for the Christians! 

Sacrificial Giving

Strange as it seems, money and possessions, which should be among the blessings of life, have tied more people in knots, caused more ulcers, and sent more people scurrying to the psychiatrist than we'll ever know.

This is largely because those who live by the rule of pocketbook or checkbook find it easy to act as if God does not exist. They try to solve all their problems by the use of their material possessions. Not having enough money to meet their needs, they become tense and anxious, and wind up tied and bound by their lack of faith.

On the other hand, sacrificial giving is an acknowledgement that God is alive and at the very center of our lives. It helps us recognize that all our money, ability, our very lives, belong to God. This is bound to result in an indescribable freedom that can never come to the people who think they must do everything for themselves.

Of course, no one can talk you into a right attitude. It will come through worship, prayer and someone act that will help you prove to yourself that you really believe God is at the center of your life.

Sacrificial giving could be that act, an act of faith in which you will find a new dimension of freedom. 



When our stress and greed become too intense, we forget to thank God and show recognition to the source of our blessings. That is why Old Testament people were required to return the first and best portion of all they gained to God. It was not theirs to keep; it belonged to God.



Thanksgiving reminds us that all we have received has been given to us by God out of love.

Steward of the Month

Submitted by: Sam, Grand Rapids, MI

On Thanksgiving Day, we remember our heritage and the founding of our great nation as a land of abundance and promise. We are blessed with abundant natural resources and unparalleled economic opportunities. We rejoice in our loved ones. Thanksgiving is also a time to give thanks for all we have that was given to us by God. We have a loved one, of sorts, in our parish that exemplifies this spirit.

For many years now, one parishioner, Michael H. has worked tirelessly on our parish's effort to feed the less fortunate at Thanksgiving at a big banquet. We run a food drive to get enough food, but it all has to be organized and cooked! Michael is the one who always does it ... and always with a smile. He organizes the gathering and delivery of the food, as well as the cooks, servers and clean-up crew.

Thanksgiving reminds us that all we have received has been given to us by God out of love. Michael reminds us what we can do with our time and talents. Thanksgiving is about giving and Michael is about Thanksgiving! ☩

