



# Church

NOVEMBER 2006

# CHAT

## THE CALL TO STEWARDSHIP

by Fr. Eulogio S. Estaris

**E**very baptized Christian has a vocation, and no matter who we are - rich or poor, young or old, educated or uneducated, successful in the eyes of the world or just managing to make ends meet - each and everyone of us has something important to give to the building of our parish community. In fact, everyone of us is called to make a uniquely personal contribution to the way Christian life is lived in our families, our parish and our community. Just as in the Old Testament Samuel was called by God to do great things, and in the Gospels, Andrew and Simon Peter were called by Jesus to be His disciples, through our baptism each of us has been called to follow Jesus and to contribute whatever we can to the work of our church.

Samuel was not rich and powerful. He was a boy with no money, no status and very little experience to draw upon. His greatest assets were his generous spirit and his eagerness to serve. Andrew and Simon Peter were poor uneducated fishermen. All they had to give was their time, their energy and their commitment. When Jesus called, they dropped what they were doing and followed Him. They didn't say, "Well, let's see, I can give an hour

a week on Wednesdays." And they didn't calculate how much income they were going to lose. They simply dropped their nets and followed Jesus.

The call that you and I have received is no different. Jesus calls each one of us to be good stewards - to take care of the gifts and talents God has given us and to share generously with others.

Stewardship means taking care of and sharing all of God's gifts. It's not just about money; it is a way of life, a way of holiness, a spirituality.

Stewardship, as a way of life, helps us to use all the gifts that we have been given including all the material things in positive, life-giving ways. True Stewardship is spirituality in action. It is the daily decision to be open to the presence and power of God's love, especially as God's love is manifested in concrete, practical things - like what we do with our time, how we share our talents and how we spend our money and material resources.



*This is an original pen and ink graphic by Ada Abinales, Youth Co-ordinator of St. Anthony's Parish, Calgary. Ada centres the graphic with the cross representing Christ. The hand represents the personal care needed in stewardship, the leaves and earth needing our tending and the Eucharistic symbols are from the cross which is Christ. Life grows from the God-head and all is represented by the circles which signify God.*

### What is a good steward?

- 1) A good steward is one who is grateful, thanking God daily for the blessings he or she has received. A good steward never stops saying "thank you."

- 2) A good steward is one who is responsible and accountable with the blessings that God has bestowed.
- 3) A good steward is one who shares God's gifts out of a sense of love and justice. A good steward knows that it is better to give than to receive, for in giving we receive far more than we could ever have imagined. *cf. Acts 2):35*
- 4) Finally, a good steward is one who makes a return to the Lord with increase. Remember the parable of the stewards to whom the master had entrusted the parable of the silver pieces? They had to render an account of their stewardship. One day you and I will have to stand in accountability before the judgment seat of our God. And God will ask: "What did you do with all the time that you had? What did you do with all the gifts that I gave you? What did you do with your life?"

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All of the good things that God has given us are meant to be shared, and every human heart has a need to give. Why? Because habits of generous giving free us from preoccupation with our own

needs and with the material things that we too often cling to in response to feelings of loneliness, fear and anger. We need to share what we have (and who we are) with others - in our parish, throughout our community and all over the world - not only because they truly need our help, but also giving is good for our souls and our well-being!

Stewardship involves prayer, reflection, sharing our ideas and learning. It requires gratitude, generosity and a willingness to be held accountable for how we have developed and used the gifts and talents we've received from a gracious and loving God.

The Scriptures tell us that after the world was created, God entrusted all of creation to our care. This responsibility for "caring for and cultivating the earth" involves a joyful appreciation for the beauty of creation, a careful preservation of the environment that we share with all living things and a profound respect for human life.

Good stewardship doesn't come easily. "We know what it means to struggle against selfishness and greed; and we realize that it is harder for many today to accept the challenge of being a good, Christian steward. Given this challenge, it is essential that we make a special effort to pray and to understand the true meaning of stewardship and live accordingly.

Everyone of us is called to stewardship. Saying "yes" to Jesus' invitation is not easy, but it makes all the difference in the way we live our lives everyday.

*May God bless you and keep you always in His love. And when your days on earth are finished and you are asked to render an account of your stewardship, may the good Lord smile upon you and say, "Well done, good and faithful steward. Come and share your Master's joy."*

(Matthew 25: 23)

## CHAT

### Question Box

1. Does a "call to stewardship" mean you're going to drive a boat?
2. Do you receive a real phone call or text message from Jesus telling you what to do?
3. How many more things in this world can you be responsible for?
4. If you are capable of caring for the planet by recycling, taking public transit, riding your bike and monitoring your power consumption, is it possible you can make an effort to rethink your spiritual inventory?



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