

## A Spiritual Stewardship: Prayer, Sacrifice and Mercy

Throughout the season of Lent and continuing on through the year we continue to stress the Spiritual Stewardship themes of **Prayer, Sacrifice and Mercy**. Through homilies, bulletin articles and petitions in the Prayer of the Faithful we will revisit **the Spirituality of Stewardship**.

Again during Lent our **Parish Commitment to Spiritual Stewardship** program will unfold. To create a demonstrative display of our commitment, we will again use **Stewardship Trees** in the back of church and in both school buildings. The symbolism of the Tree is important both in scripture and to our Parish. Next time you are heading into the Gathering Place be sure to look to the right of the doors. A Tree was used as a permanent symbol of what the parish was able to accomplish through Stewardship gifts. And every year our Giving Trees start out full before Christmas and become barren as parishioners take the envelopes off the trees to fill with gifts for St. Mark's parishioners.



Our Stewardship Trees will start out barren on Ash Wednesday and become full of leaves as parishioners place their Stewardship commitments on the Trees during Lent.



**Prayer** is the first and most important duty and joy of every faithful follower of Jesus Christ. With prayer you can obtain guidance from God, participate in God's Providence over the lives of others, obtain the strength to do good and avoid evil, and pour out a myriad of blessings, both tangible and mystical, upon the whole world. Prayer is true treasure and there is where your heart should be. Whoever loves God, prays.

**Sacrifice** is the second and next most important duty and joy of every beloved child of God. Christ offered the ultimate Sacrifice to God--His own prayerful suffering and death on the Cross.

"Prayer and Sacrifice--these are my strengths."  
(St. Therese of Lisieux)

**Mercy** is essential to the life of everyone who hopes to obtain sufficient mercy from God to eventually enter into Eternal Life. "Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy." (Mt 5: 7). We can practice mercy for others by forgiving injury and insult, by doing good to those who harm us, and by praying and sacrificing for those in need, be they friend or foe. The practice of mercy includes offering our time and talents to those in spiritual or physical need. It also includes giving alms (treasure). But the most important way to be merciful is by being kind and forgiving and patient to others, and by praying and sacrificing for others.

- On **March 9<sup>th</sup>, Ash Wednesday**, Stewardship Trees will be placed in the Church and both Elementary and Junior High Schools.
- Parishioners are asked to take a two part leaf and write your **spiritual commitment** on both, place one on the Tree and take one home with you. (You need not put your name on it.)

### ***Some possibilities for your Lenten Commitment:***

- Attend Sunday Mass every week.
- Make a pledge to attend the 7:00 Communion Service several times a week.
- Attend the monthly Stewardship Prayer Service
- Make a pledge to attend daily mass often
- Sing joyfully at Mass: Remember, singing is praying twice!
- Commit to reach out often for the graces of Reconciliation.
- Make a pledge to attend Adoration of the Eucharist each Thursday afternoon in Church between 2-3 pm.
- Say a rosary as often as possible or better yet, join the rosary prayer group Monday nights at 7:30 pm in the Parish Center.
- Join the Friday Bible study group on Friday mornings in the Gathering Place 9:30 – 11:15
- Read scripture every day. Read the upcoming readings for Sunday mass (in the bulletin) or just open the Bible and read.
- Pray for the members of the parish