October 2001

Dear Father and Stewardship Committee Chairperson:

The Archdiocese in its attempt to assist you in your Christian Stewardship Program for the year 2002, has prepared material. A hard copy of this material is enclosed for you as well as a floppy disk for your convenience. When using the floppy disk, wherever you find brackets, [ ] please complete the information, such as Stewardship Sunday date for your parish, your parish's name, etc.

The Stewardship campaign theme for 2002 will be "Your own gifts we offer to you."

The following are enclosed for your use:

"Your Own Gifts We Offer to You"
This is a statement that explains the purpose of Stewardship.
This may be used as a letter from the Priest or an article in the monthly newsletter.

"Everything is a Gift From God"
This may be used as a letter from the Priest or an article in the monthly newsletter.

Christian Stewardship Committee Card
This is prepared in English and Greek (if your parish requires Greek).

Trifold: Christian Stewardship Program 2002
This is prepared in English and Greek (if your parish requires Greek).

The aforementioned material is adequate to begin your Christian Stewardship Program for 2002. The Archdiocese plans to provide you with further material in the future.

Archdiocesan Stewardship Office

EVERTHING IS A GIFT FROM YOU

ESTABLISHING YOUR STEWARDSHIP COMMITMENT

In his final prayer to God at the time of his death, King David said, "Everything in heaven and earth is yours ... all riches and wealth come from you. Now, our God, we give you thanks and we praise your glorious name. Yet my people and I cannot give you anything, because everything is a gift from you, and we have only given back what is yours already." (I Chronicles 29: 11-14)

When we make our Stewardship Commitment, we should remember that we have not given God something, which belongs to us and for which he should be grateful. Rather, we should be thankful for the bountiful gifts with which God has blessed us and gladly offer our assistance to his Church.

Through our Stewardship Commitment, we are able to offer our support to the many ministries or services of our Church, both locally and nationally. Our Church has no other means of providing for these vital programs than from Stewards such as you. When your pledges are established in faith toward God's work, we experience the joy that we are we are participating in his holy mission.

Your pledge or commitment, will, in essence, return to God the fruit from the gifts he has given to you. It will assist our Church's mission of preaching the word of God in order to sustain the [Name of parish] parish of which you are a vital part. Your personal commitment of your abilities, time, resources and services will serve as your anchor to Christ and serve as spiritual fulfillment.

The proportion of the gifts you commit should stem from the love and concern you have for your Church, your willingness to make personal sacrifices and your ability to recognize the needs of the Church even beyond the local level. You alone must determine your response according to your love of God. Then, and only then, will you discover the true meaning of Christian Stewardship.

As you consider your commitment, reflect upon the following message that was once given by a pastor to his congregation.

"Man is saved by trusting in God's unselfish love. Any man can be saved who is willing to let God love him."

There is no growth until you give. God gives first, but you do not grow until you give. The attitude toward life's blessings, which causes us to give, is the attitude that causes us to grow.

I need to give. Without giving, I can never grow. Some give until it hurts. Others give until it feels good. Giving is the attitude that brings growth.

When we give in Christ's name, he promises to multiply that gift for his Church and in our lives.

YOUR OWN GIFTS WE OFFER TO YOU

"Our hearts were crushed. But our spirits will never die." Archbishop Demetrios spoke these words in reference to the September 11th catastrophe that befell our nation. We turn to the Church to revive our spirits, to restore our spiritual and emotional well-being. Our hope is realized through our worship in Christ.

The Liturgy is called the Eucharist, because it provides us with an opportunity to thank God weekly for the many gifts he bestows on us. At the Great Entrance we offer bread and wine to the Lord, which is changed into the Body and Blood of Christ. We also, at this time, offer ourselves to God with hope that we will become transformed into the Body of Christ by our participation in the Liturgy and Communion. The priest offers the gifts to the Father with the words; "Your own gifts we offer to you, with all our being and for all our blessings." This means, Lord, that which you give to us, we return and offer back to you, with our whole heart and being and for all the blessings and gifts you give to us. We take part of the possessions that God has given us and return them to him. We also take our life and offer it to him. On the "Prosforon," the bread that is offered and becomes the Body of Christ is found the inscription, "IC XC Nika," or Jesus Christ conquers. We have chosen to use the sign of the "Prosforon" as the logo of our Christian Stewardship Program, because we believe as the wine and bread become the Body and Blood of Christ, that the money we offer through Stewardship is transformed into ministry for the glory of God and for the perpetuation of the Orthodox Church.

Your Stewardship offering is a very serious matter to God. It tells God what place he has in the priorities of your life. As God has been generous to us, he expects us to be generous to him and his Church. Your Stewardship offering becomes the tool of ministry, salvation and healing. Please submit your Christian Stewardship Card for 2002 to our parish today. As you prayerfully decide what to give, ponder upon the words:

"Your own gifts we offer to you, with all our being and for all our blessings."

Stewardship Committee

[NAME OF PARISH] GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH
[ADDRESS, CITY, STATE, ZIP CODE] • TELEPHONE [NUMBER] • FACSIMILE [NUMBER]

2002 CHRISTIAN STEWARDSHIP COMMITMENT CARD

In gratitude for God's blessings, I/we pledge to contribute for Christ's work at [Name of Parish] Church for 2002:

A total amount of $500_____ $750 _____ $1,000 _____ More/Other _____.

$_____weekly $_____monthly $_____quarterly $_____semi-annually $_____annually

Please Print

Name _____ Telephone Number [____] _____

Address _____ Please return on Stewardship Sunday, [Date], 2002 at

City _____St_____Zip_____ the Liturgy or mail beforehand.

[NAME OF PARISH] GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH
[ADDRESS, CITY, STATE, ZIP CODE] • TELEPHONE [NUMBER] • FACSIMILE [NUMBER]

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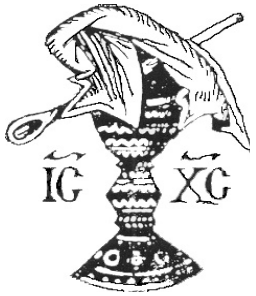


WHAT IS STEWARDSHIP?

"Your own gifts we offer to you," with these words, we offer ourselves and all of creation to the Lord at every Divine Liturgy. We acknowledge that everything we offer to God is a gift from Him. We take what God has given and we return it to him as a gesture of our thanksgiving and praise.

As stewards of God's gifts, we return to him a portion of our time, service and money for Christ's work on earth through His Church.

The Christian Stewardship Program is an opportunity to respond to Christ's love by perpetuating our His ministry through the Church. Stewardship places the responsibility to support the Church exactly where it belongs, on us.

WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY?

King David said, "all things come from You, and of Your own we have given You." (Chronicles 29:14)

A Steward, according to the Bible, is one who manages and uses the gifts entrusted to him by God for his personally welfare and for the perpetuation of the Lord's work.

Our money and possessions are not ours, but on loan. When we give to the Church, we return to God, the Owner His rightful portion. The more we are given, the more is expected of us.

WHY IS MONEY NEEDED?

Money is a necessary tool for ministry. To fulfill the Church's mission, we are called upon to commit ourselves to bear our fair share in the financial support of our Church's expenses on a parish, Metropolis and Archdiocesan level.

HOW MUCH DOES THE PARISH NEED TO OPERATE?

[Name of Parish] operating budget for the calendar year 2004 will be about $[amount]. The Stewardship Committee has set a goal of $[amount] for Stewardship giving.

2004 BUDGET

STEWARDSHIP BUDGET $[AMOUNT]

Our goal is to raise our entire operating budget from Stewardship. We have learned that we cannot depend on special affairs to meet our budget. Practicing Christian Stewardship enable us to spend quality time in doing the work of Christ.

The expenses of our parish are vital for our Church, and are generally: For Keeping in Touch With You, For Maintaining our Buildings, For Those Who Serve Us, For Worship and Education and For Commitment to the National Church (15%) of our budget. The quality of our service as a parish and a national Church depends directly on the level of our giving.

WHAT GUIDE CAN I USE TO DETERMINE MY GIVING?

Proportionate giving involves two things. Firstly, that our level of giving rises out of our level of income. Secondly, that giving out of thanks will involve sharing a portion of that income for God's work.

We should ask ourselves "what is a worthy level to determine my Stewardship?" The Bible gives much guidance by teaching us that direct giving to God and his work should be proportionate to our income, wealth and possessions. Each person is to give according to his or her own ability.

The Old Testament laid down the standard of the tithe or 10% of one's income. This provides us with the principle that giving should be a proportion of our income. Each Steward should determine what percentage of his or her income will be committed to Christ and the Church for 2004.

We should consider what we spend on cable television, holidays, pets, dining out, sports events, vacations and so on. How do these compare with our giving for God's work?

We should ask ourselves if our Stewardship Commitment is serious and responsible before God. Is our gift a genuine response to the Lord: "Your own gifts we offer to you?"

AM I EXPECTED TO INCREASE MY STEWARDSHIP COMMITMENT FOR 2004?

Yes! In making a decision, one should keep in mind that the expenses of our parish and the Church increase every year. In order to meet our 2004 expenses, each Steward should increase his or her commitment.

AM I BOUND TO MY STEWARDSHIP COMMITMENT?

Your Stewardship Commitment is kept in confidence. Jesus taught us that giving should be done quietly, generously and out of sight of others. If you wish to revise your commitment during the year for any reason, you may send a note to the Church Office indicating your intention.

HOW SHALL I PAY MY STEWARDSHIP COMMITMENT?

You may pay your commitment in the manner that suits you best. Since small regular contributions are easier to manage, it is suggested that your contribution be made on a weekly or monthly basis. You may however also contribute, quarterly, semi-annually or annually.

WHO WILL MY STEWARDSHIP COMMITMENT INCLUDE?

The Stewardship Commitment includes husband and wife for married couples and single adults as Stewards. Our Sunday School students make their own Stewardship Offering each Sunday. Family members over 18 years of age, who are employed, should make their own Stewardship Commitment.

Participation in the Christian Stewardship Program allows each Greek Orthodox Steward to vote and seek elective office in the administration of the parish as provided in the Archdiocesan and Parish by-laws.

HOW WILL MY STEWARDSHIP CARD BE COLLECTED?

The Stewardship Commitment Cards will be collected on...

STEWARDSHIP SUNDAY

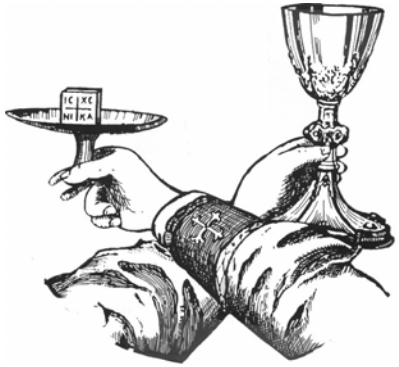
[DATE], 2003

after the Divine Liturgy or they can be mailed to the Church Office before [Date], 2004.

HOW CAN A NEW MEMBER JOIN OUR CHURCH?

Orthodox Christians, who wish to be served by our parish, may become Stewards of [Name of Parish] by making a Stewardship Commitment for the current year.

CHRISTIAN STEWARDSHIP PROGRAM 2004



"Your Own Gifts
We Offer To You"

[PARISH NAME]
GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH

[PARISH ADDRESS]
[CITY STATE, ZIP]

Telephone [Number]
Facsimile [Number]