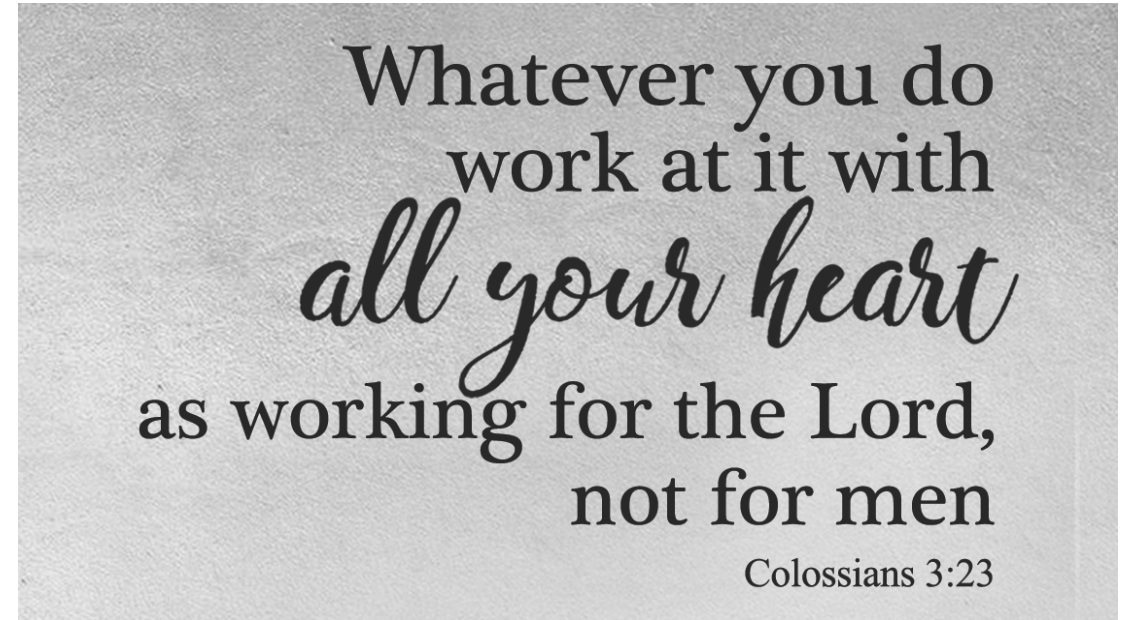


Saint Phocas the Gardener lived in the late 3<sup>rd</sup> Century, in the ancient region of Paphlagonia (now northern Turkey). Phocas lived humbly on the sale of fruits and vegetables he would grow in his garden. Through his work, Phocas fed the hungry and gave shelter to those in need. Because of his dedication to his work and his generosity to those in need, he became a Christian example to others. Even the non-believers treated him with respect, and by his Christ-like manner, many were drawn to the Christian Faith.

Saint Euphrosynos worked as cook in a monastery in Palestine, serving the brother monks humbly and faithfully. The others were not aware of the depth of his spiritual growth until it was revealed in a dream to a priest-monk of the monastery and then related to the brother monks. Euphrosynos is known to us by his humble work – Saint Euphrosynos the Cook.

In times of trouble or worry, especially over our career, we call upon God to strengthen us, to provide opportunity and to bring us success. When we achieve some measure of worldly success, it is easy to say to ourselves as we read in the Old Testament Book of Deuteronomy (8:17), “My power and the strength of my hands have produced this wealth for me.” But the next verse quickly reminds us, “Remember the Lord your God, for it is he who gives you the ability to produce wealth.”



As Christian Stewards we are called to give back to God from the “first fruits” of our labor.

We support our parish and her ministries in an intentional way and not with only what is left after everything else has been taken care of.

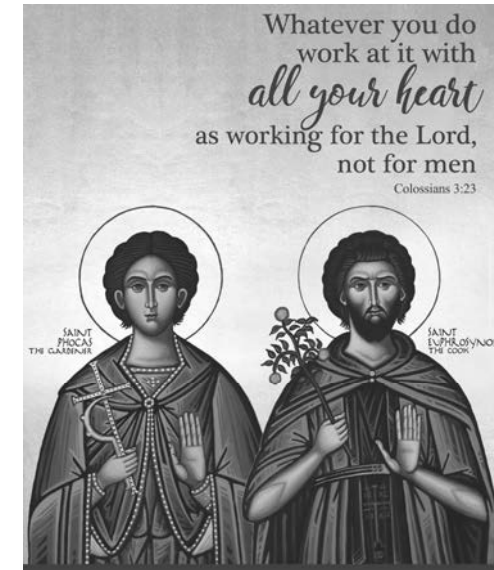


### BRING THEM TO ME

Jesus Is concerned about the 5,000 men plus women and children that are with him in the wilderness. His disciples tell him that all they have are five loaves and two small fish that a boy has offered. Jesus' response is the phrase, "*Bring them to me.*" Jesus then takes the loaves, blesses and breaks them, and feeds 5,000 men plus women and children.

We also bring what we have to Jesus. We offer bread and wine. He returns it to us as His body and blood in Holy Communion. We offer ourselves and we become the Church, His body on earth. No matter how much we give, He cannot be outdone. Just like the boy who offered the loaves and the fish, if we offer what we have – however great or small our gift – with prayer and humility, God will receive our gifts and multiply them to feed His people.

## What is Christian Stewardship?



Christian Stewardship is...

...learning how to be a responsible and concerned caretaker of Christ's Church; it is learning how to enjoy Church life and be happy in Church work., for in Her dwells the fullness of the Spirit of God.

...our active commitment to use all our time, talent and treasure for the benefit of humankind in grateful acknowledgment of Christ's redeeming love.

...caring for the needs of others.

...offering one's self to God as He offered Himself to us.

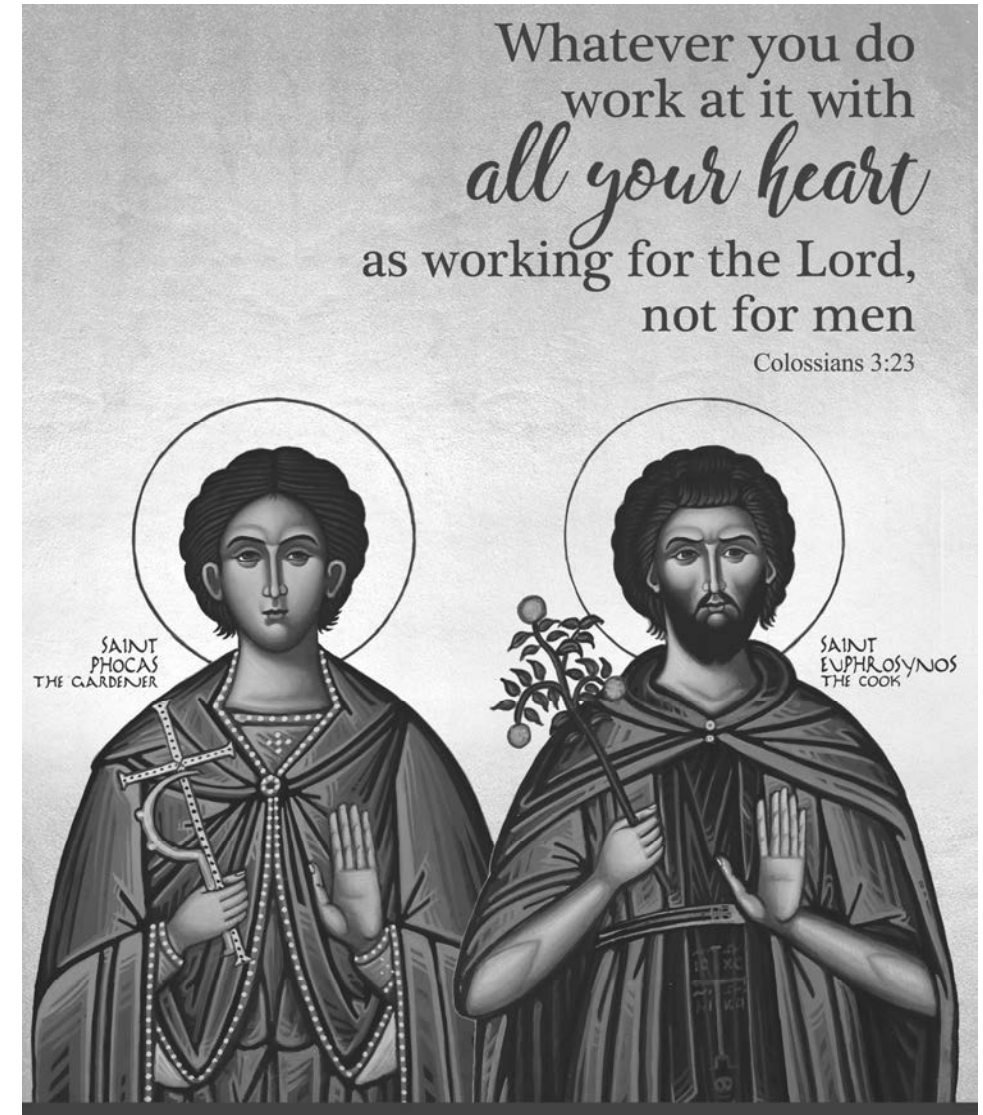
...what a person does after saying "I believe...", as proof of that belief.

...devotion and service to God and His Church as persons, as families, as diocese/metropolis, as national Church and as Church universal.



Christian Stewardship is about becoming good caretakers of all that God has given us. God has given each of us special and unique gifts. And through Holy Scripture He teaches us all that we have is a loan. He lends everything to us, and reminds us that

one day He will ask us to give a detailed accounting of what we have done with the gifts He has given us. Archbishop Anastasios of Albania has noted that “we find ourselves by offering ourselves.” Have we learned the blessedness of generously giving to others of all we have?

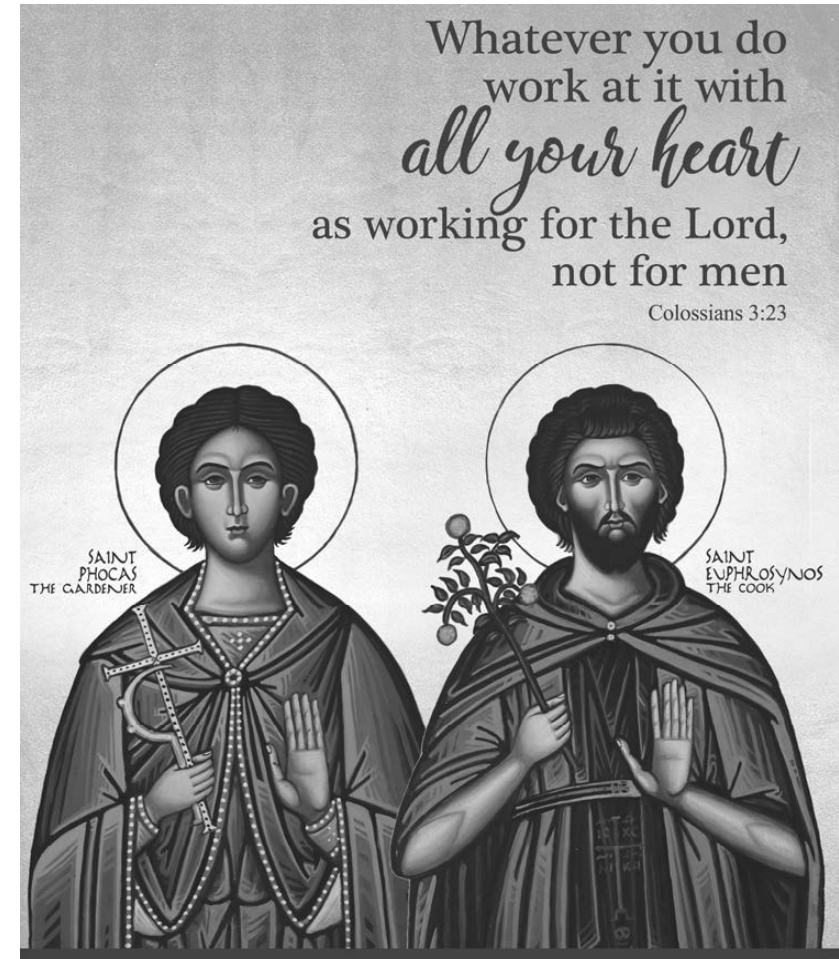


Life on earth is a gift. The work we do is also a gift if we see it as an opportunity to serve God and others. Saint Paul instructs us, “Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for men...” (Colossians 3:23). When we see our work in this way, we are able to become Christian stewards of our work.



One day, a person complained to his priest that the Church and Christianity is one continual “**give, give, give.**” To which the priest replied, “Thank you very much for the finest definition of

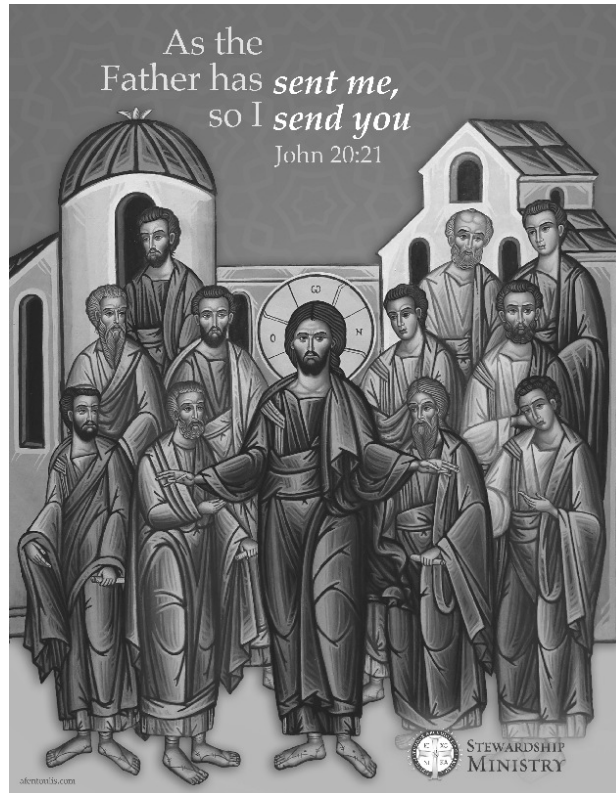
Christianity I have ever heard. You’re right, Christianity is all about a constant “give, give, give.” God giving His only Son to the world to show His unconditional love. His Son Jesus giving His life on the cross to forgive our sins and destroy death. Then our Lord’s disciples giving all they had to make sure God’s Good News of love was preached to all people everywhere. They not only gave away their homes and businesses, but even gave up their lives as martyrs in gratitude to God!



It is by offering our blessings back to God that He will be able to continue His forgiving, healing, liberating, empowering, transfiguring, loving ministry through the Church. For God, Infinite though He is, has chosen to work through us, through our gifts, to continue His saving work in the world today.

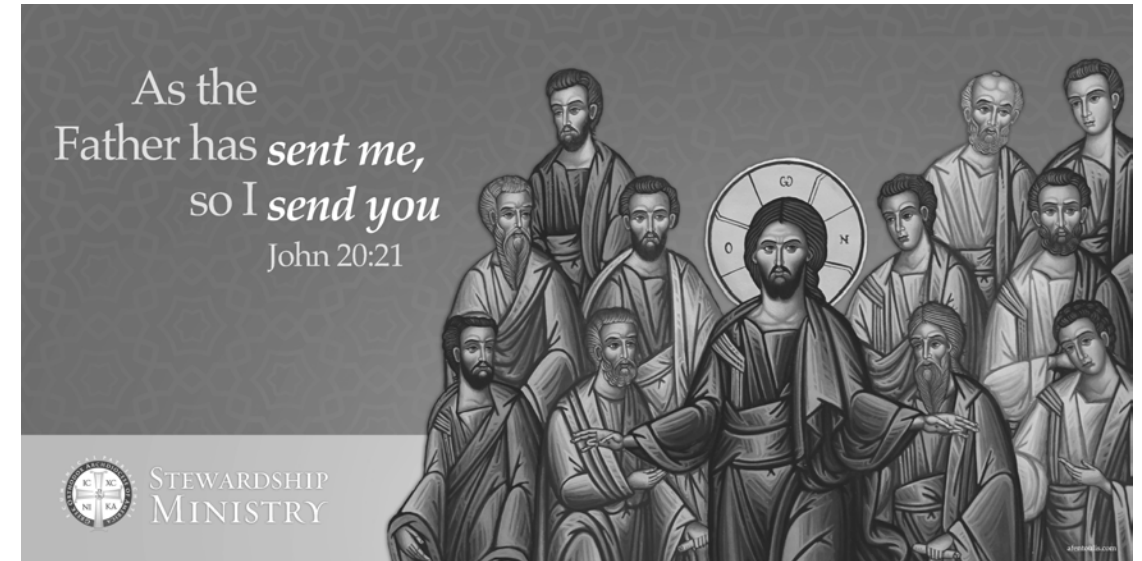
*Fr. Anthony M. Coniaris*

## You are the Voice of Christ in a Changing World



The base from which we serve as the *Voice of Christ in a Changing World* is the parish. A strong parish provides opportunities for sharing the Good News of Christ, for welcoming those that are searching for a spiritual home, and a base from which we are sent out into the world. The parish also provides a place for worship, community and education in the faith. To be stewards of the Gospel, we need to be stewards of our parish. This requires the vision and inspiration to see the parish, not as it is, but as it could be. We are called to offer ourselves and our treasure to make our local church all that is can be.

## YOU ARE THE VOICE OF CHRIST IN A CHANGING WORLD



We live in a physical world that places great value on material possessions. Material possessions and wealth may bring power and status. But wealth and possessions can be fleeting. Circumstances change. It is the voice of Jesus Christ and the truth of His Gospel that remain constant. In our spiritual relationship with our Creator, we realize that we are called to be good stewards of His creation. And as stewards of His Gospel, we are called to use our material, worldly possessions to meet the needs of others.