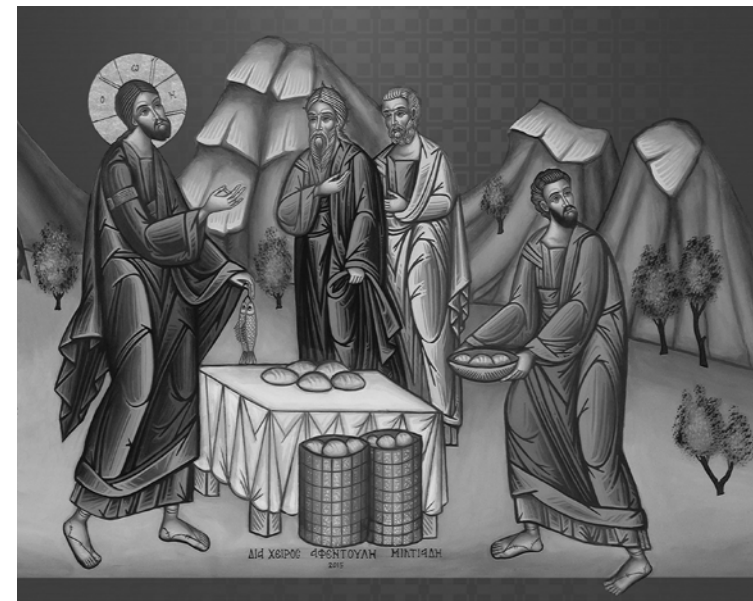




Through faith, God's will is accomplished in the world. Our great example is Mary, the Theotokos, the Mother of our Lord. When Archangel Gabriel came to her at the Annunciation, tradition and hymnology hold that all creation awaited her response. In faith and obedience to the will of God, Mary replied to the angel, "Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord; let it be according to your word" (Luke 1:38 NKJV). Mary responds with faith and fulfills God's will for all the world. As Orthodox Christian Stewards, we offer our life to the fulfillment of God's plan.



### **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.

*Williams & McKibben in Oriented Leadership*



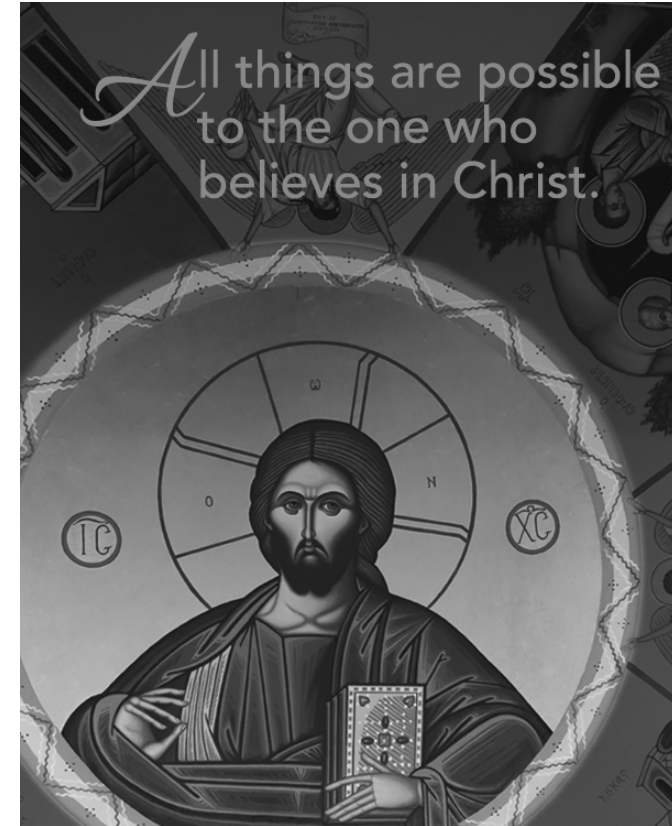
Christian Stewardship is about becoming good caretakers of all that God has given us. God has given each of us special and unique gifts. And through Holy Scripture He teaches us all that we have is a loan. He lends everything to us, and reminds us that

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?



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

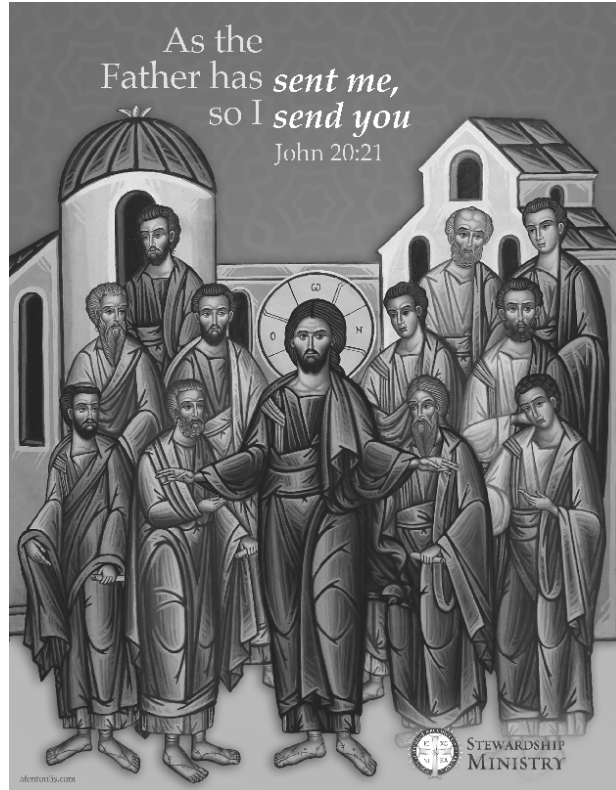
Christianity I have ever heard. You’re right, Christianity is all about a constant “give, give, give.” God giving His only Son to the world to show His unconditional love. His Son Jesus giving His life on the cross to forgive our sins and destroy death. Then our Lord’s disciples giving all they had to 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.



*When we believe, stewardship follows.  
Stewardship is faith in action;  
action motivated by humble gratitude to God  
for his blessings in our life.*