



Stewardship of Community

By Jarrett Kerbel (11/07/25)

God gives us the gift of community to remind us that 'love of neighbor' and 'love of enemy' are not abstract notions to embrace without regular application.

Following Jesus is not a solo activity. We are not allowed to say 'we do not need each other' - as St. Paul writes - first, because we only really represent Jesus through our diversity, and second, because we serve him best when our many different gifts come together.

As you get to know me, you will learn that for me "stewardship" names a set of practices that far exceeds the financial. Jesus was - of course - very concerned about the spiritual dangers that arise from a distorted relationship to money. He taught about this peril much more than any other opportunity for sin, including sex. However, Jesus calls us to live our whole lives in the presence of God with every aspect of our life supported by God and accountable to God.

We live before God. Not in time but in space, i.e. we stand before God. Life with God changes everything for a disciple.

A with-God life is not a compartmentalized life. Every area of our life is engaged by God's loving care and direction. We don't get to live our lives in separate buckets - a finance bucket, a family bucket, a school bucket, a work bucket, etc. Even our political activity - which is a species of care for the community - is conducted within our relationship with God. Where else do our moral resources come from besides our life-encompassing relationship with God?

More locally, stewardship of community means availing ourselves of Christ's teachings and behaviors in our life together. We gather in a covenant community constituted by our Baptismal Vows and from that foundation we strive - with God's help always - to embody forms of life that encourage human flourishing in our church. In all we do, we communicate respect for the dignity of each human person and integrity in our

own actions. In agreement or disagreement, we conduct ourselves in a way that we can regard with self-respect.

Another thing to know about me is my love for acronyms. I use two acronyms to guide my conduct in community. One is GIVE and the other is FAST. GIVE stands for Generous, Inquisitive, Validating and Easy Going. FAST stands for Fair, Apologize(less), Stand on Values and tell the Truth in love. More on these next time.

Family, Children and Youth Ministry

First, expect an email from me searching for the best time to meet with families. For now, I am proposing Friday, November 21, for pizza, a parent meeting and a movie for the kids. I want to get to know you and I want to hear what you want and hope for from the church. We will do some brainstorming together to come up with even more ways to live up to our Baptismal promises to children and families. Remember when the congregation affirmed their support for you and your children on your journey into the full stature of Christ during the Baptism service? We take that promise very seriously!

Second, I want to encourage you to share your Saints with your children! One great faith formation opportunity for family life is to read stories and share about the Saints that matter to you. Children need positive examples of human souls flourishing in service to Jesus and the saints are an excellent place to start! There are many children's books about St. Francis for example and you can find excellent resources on-line too. The Saints I learned about as a child are still with me to this day, especially Dorothy Day, Martin Luther King, Jonathan Myrick Daniels, John Lewis, and the Berrigan Brothers, guiding my path to Jesus.