

Dear Fellow Parishioners:

I'd like to share what stewardship means to me. When we think of stewardship, the first thing that comes to mind is money, right? Money, pledges, and some folks even think tax credits.

That thinking changed for me ten years ago. I was diagnosed with cancer at 37 - devastating news for anyone at any age. While on chemo, we learned my wife Priscilla was pregnant with our son Nicholas. I remember crying and praying to God, "please just let me see him born." You know, God granted my prayer. I asked God to let me see him turn one - and it was granted. I asked God to let me hear him say Daddy and run around and dance. God gave me this, too. Never in my wildest dreams did I ever expect to be around in ten years - I hadn't even dreamed it at the time. I also didn't dream, after years of trying to grow our family and failing, that God would show even more mercy and He gave us Christiana Maria (names for Christ and Mary) five years ago - after all our hopes were gone. Even farther was the overwhelming feeling that comes over me when they laugh and show heartwarming love to each other. They unknowingly have shown me the pleasing face of God - each time is a very humbling moment.

Cancer is never gone from my mind, especially after having several challenging bouts in the short years since diagnosis. But, I am reminded with each milestone (Nicholas is now nine, Christiana is five), that it is all a gift! I didn't earn it. I don't deserve it. I have continued good health today and for that I remain thankful and indebted to God. Whether the gift is through my doctor's hands or his judgment (because his talents are his gift), diet, or that God may have something else in store for me and wants me healthy for a reason, I can't say. But I can say I am living proof of God's mercy and love, and I owe Him in a

big way. I am frequently reminded by world events to take stock on exactly how many real and true gifts I've been given and am gently reminded that I must give as generously as I am given - lest God's mercy be taken away.

The dictionary defines Stewardship as: Managing the property of another. The Church is what Jesus left us; we are the body of His Church; we are the stewards of His Church on earth. All we have is the result of the gifts we are given freely from God. When we are called upon to be stewards, which means to me that we need to manage God's property and use our gifts to give back for His Glory. For me, St. Paul's is the property we need to manage for God's work. Some have the gift of financial success; others have gifts of talent and time. Either way, we are all called upon to generously use the fruit of our gifts to take care of God's property - St. Paul's Church and those who aren't quite here yet.

I joined St. Paul's 10 years ago and was Chrismated eight and a half years ago. Priscilla and I have found our very best friends here - and a community of warm, friendly and God-loving people we consider our family. We believe St. Paul's provides a loving environment, in which our family will grow closer to God.

Let me end with a reminder from Saint Paul's letters to the Corinthians that continues to remind me where my heart needs to be: *"The one who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and the one who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. Each of you must give according to what you have decided in your heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. And God is able to provide you with every blessing in abundance, so that by always having enough of everything, you may share abundantly in every good work."*

Thank you for this opportunity to share my thoughts with
you!

In Christ,

Ron Tedesco,
Stewardship Committee Chairman

