

Stewardship of Treasure Talk
By Ignacio Davila
November 2-3, 2013

I am happy to speak to you today about Stewardship. I'm grateful to be a member of this great community at Sacred Heart. My wife Krystyna and I have been parishioners since 1999. It has been in this community that our two children were born. Agnes is almost 11 and Nicolas 7. Both are attending Sacred Heart School. It is with this community's support that we are building our family.

The Church and we here at Sacred Heart understand Stewardship to be about giving back to God of our time, talent and treasure as a response to the many ways He has blessed us.

My parents and grandparents taught me by example about sharing the many blessings they received. Here are a few examples on how they put Stewardship to practice:

My mom was the catechist at our local parish. She had prepared hundreds of kids for First Communion.

My granddad was an accountant for the Archdiocese of Puebla in Mexico. It was a volunteer job he did for years joyfully.

He was also an artist. Many churches throughout Puebla displayed the frescos he painted.

My grandmother would volunteer providing food for the poor.

When thinking specifically about Stewardship of Treasure, Krystyna and I are very clear that all that we have comes from God.

Yes, we have been working very hard for many years. We continue to work hard earning all kinds of resources. We use our skills to achieve that. Also opportunities might have "just appeared." We remind ourselves that while the world could call it luck and that we earn it, it is the Divine Providence that gives it all.

The process of giving back what is His, Stewardship, is a very personal decision. Let me share what we do at the Davila household:

First we pray.

Then we discern, applying the principle of *do you want it? Or do you need it?*

If we need it, it is an easy decision.

But if we want it; will it help us to develop a stronger relationship with Jesus? If the answer is yes, then we add it to the list of things we will do and plan to put resources towards it.

We understand that God will want us to buy food and supplies, cover household expenses, pay bills, provide for the kids' schooling, save for college and all other basic needs. All of them are good things.

Then we do the conscious decision to set a percentage of our annual income to support Church needs. Sometimes it is hard. What makes it easier for us it to remember that "to give is a result of gratitude, justice and trust in God." Good. That takes care of the financial decision.

What about time? We volunteer, with our time and talent, at the service of different ministries and activities:

Every Saturday morning I walk the path of Faith with my fellow brothers at *Men's Group*.
I support the RCIA program preparing dismissals and classes.
Krystyna serves on the Pastoral Council and attends the Moms' Group.
Together we participate in *Marriage Enrichment Programs*.
I serve on the *School Commission* advising on technology issues.
Nicolas is our joyful greeter and is getting ready for his First Communion.
Agnes volunteers as altar server.

Today we heard about Zacchaeus. Jesus did not ask of him anything more than opening the doors of his house. It was Zacchaeus who decided to take 50% of his net-worth and give it back.

At the Men's Group, we conclude our Saturday meetings with St. Francis' Prayer. One of its lines reads "it is in giving that we receive" ... "it is in giving that we receive." For our household that summarizes Stewardship.

You will soon receive a letter from Fr. Steve along with your 2014 Stewardship of Treasure Commitment Card. Take time to read Father's letter and consider how God has blessed you.

Then, return your 2014 treasure commitment to Sacred Heart before Thanksgiving either through the offering basket at Mass today or through the mail this week in the return envelope provided.

Also, if you're not yet giving 5% of your income to the parish and setting aside an equal amount for charity, please consider "taking a step" in your giving percentage goal this year.

Our parish goal this year is to have over 900 commitment cards returned. Last year, we received about 800. If you have not made a formal commitment in the past, this is the year to start.

Taking time to think and pray about your financial giving as a steward of God's gifts helps not only your personal household planning and budgeting, but also helps the parish plan and budget more effectively.

Thank you for your time today.