

Dear Parishioners,

Who is a Christian Steward? I am, or I strive to be one. When I was baptized into this faith I was initiated into a life of Christian Discipleship, which means I have to learn who Jesus Christ is, how to follow him, and to put my faith into action. I made this commitment when I was confirmed in the faith and I strive to fulfill it in my vocation as an ordained priest.

In their pastoral letter, Stewardship: A Disciple's Response, the United States Bishops offer four characteristics for Christian stewardship. A Christian Steward...

- 1 – Receives God's gifts gratefully,
- 2 – Cherishes and tends them in a responsible and accountable manner,
- 3 – Shares them with justice and love for others, and
- 4 – Returns them with increase to the Lord.

I was never so grateful for the gift of my faith until last Sunday afternoon when my nephew Damen was confirmed at St. Joseph parish in Freeport, Illinois. Near the end of the Mass he got up and gave a moving talk about what being confirmed means to him. He was eloquent, he spoke with conviction, he convinced us all that the gift of faith he has been given is the greatest gift of his young life. I also know that in his own journey towards being confirmed he attended all the classes, usually going by himself, requiring no encouragement from his parents. He built the cross their parish uses for the Good Friday Service and it is beautiful. He has been an altar server, even into his high school years.

God has blessed Damen's life with the gift of faith and it is uniquely his. As his uncle I believe that, perhaps in some small way, I've played a role in shaping it. But seeing Damen put his faith into action makes me even more grateful for the gift of my own faith. You see, the gift of faith is unique *to* all of us, but when we put that gift to use it is a common gift *for* all of us.

People who are grateful for the gift of faith are the ones who put it to good use in their daily lives when they pray, worship, participate in the sacramental life of the Church, and choose to lovingly abide by God's will. We are "Eucharistic People" and to be Eucharistic means to be grateful. When we are grateful for the gift of faith we are able to joyfully express and share that gift, and when we do, it multiplies and we are able to see the abundance of God's love in our lives.

In joyful hope,
Fr. Tim Seigel