EVERY PORTION MATTERS!

Once upon a time, a festival was to be held in a certain village. To ensure there would be enough wine for the celebration, each member of the village agreed to pour one bottle of his best wine into a large cask. “If I fill my bottle with water,” reasoned one villager, “the dilution will be so slight, who will notice?” But when the feast and time for merrymaking commenced, and the cask was tapped, nothing but water poured forth. Every member in the village had reasoned alike: “My portion will not be missed!”

Scripture is filled with passages of God’s call for us to be generous, loving, compassionate givers. The priority of compassionate stewardship is not to pay the bills. It is about how we, as a community, can do God’s work with love and compassion. It is less about the parish’s need to receive, and more about our need to give. It is our generosity with the gifts and blessings God has entrusted to us.

Compassionate stewardship is an attitude and a way of life.
We are called to be compassionate stewards, placing the needs of others before our own. Scripture is filled with passages of God’s call for us to be generous, loving, compassionate givers. Saint Paul’s Second Letter to the Corinthians tells us of God’s call for us to “excel in the grace of giving.” We are “hard-wired” to live as members of the Body of Christ and serve our larger community with compassion and love.

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.
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.

…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 demonstrate respectful consideration for the earth's natural resources, then we can also begin to discern the perspective of the kingdom “on earth as it is in heaven” (the Lord's Prayer)

Stewardship of Creation