

STEWARDSHIP TALK GIVEN AT MASS LAST WEEKEND

By: Becky Dhooghe

My name is Becky Dhooghe. I'd like to talk with you about my stewardship journey. I hope you've seen the "Stewarding Our Gifts" prayer card. The photo features hands, one holding the Blessed Sacrament and the other surrounding It. I've thought a lot about 'hands' and my own stewardship life.

Growing up in a small farming community in north central Kansas, the Catholic church was the most visible landmark in town, as St. Patrick's is in Parsons. Both were built by hands, which laid bricks, placed windows and, according to my dad, loaded rock to take to town and place in the steeple of my birth church. Hands folded to pray, hugged to comfort and encourage, placed hard earned money into the collection basket, bid 'welcome' to Mass and, most important of all, held bread and wine that became body and blood.

Here at St. Patrick's I've had many opportunities to use my hands. The best days of my week are those when I can come to Mass and when I spend time in Adoration. No matter what's happened or not happened in my life, I have never left the Adoration Chapel feeling the same as when I entered. I invite all of you to please consider an Adoration hour. At times I've thought I'm too tired to spend an hour, I have too much to do, how will I ever get everything finished tonight? But, God always takes care of it for me.

That hour that I use my hands to pray and offer the Rosary truly changes me. One of the most Faith – filled people I know is my brother, who is a 'regular' at daily Mass. At this point in both our lives we can attend daily Mass. He and I talk a lot about Faith and we both agree that our days are never as good if we miss daily Mass.

Another way I use my hands is through the blessing of tithing. I say 'blessing' because it has been freeing for me. I come from a long line of worriers. It's genetic; it's in my DNA. I'm also a list maker. My parents taught us kids to be frugal, to work hard and take care of what we had. I always gave to the Church but about ten years ago began to tithe.

It was scary at first and there were many Sundays when I thought I just couldn't afford it. Returning to list making, I began to change how I did my monthly budget. Instead of tithing being 3rd or lower on the list, it moved closer to the top of the list. Now, the first item on my budget list is 'Church'. My giving

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feels from the heart. I've had many experiences in those ten years when God has clearly shown me that He does always provide. I have received much peace through tithing. I look forward to doing so, and ask that you pray about doing it if you don't currently tithe. It's a wonderful way to thank God for all the gifts He's given and for the ability to use our hands.

Finally, if you're uncertain or even anxious about how you can steward your gifts, I recommend coming into the church and spending some time just looking at our beautiful Crucifix, especially at our Lord's hands. He looks the same on our Crucifix as He does in every other Catholic Church. His hands never change their position: they are always open, waiting for us to come and love and serve Him.

WHAT STEWARDSHIP MEANS TO ME:

By: Dick Auvigne

Because everything we have in life is a gift from God, true stewardship means that we should return at least ten percent of all that we possess. When you really think about that, it seems nearly impossible, and I doubt many people actually meet this goal, but it's one we should all strive toward.

It should never begin and end with our checkbooks. We should also be dedicated to giving our time and our talent. There are unlimited opportunities in life to set a good example, to offer a helping hand, and to say "yes" when asked to participate. It's not always convenient or comfortable, but it's always the right thing to do.

Perhaps you serve as a lector, a greeter, help with funeral dinners, or with money counting or landscaping. Maybe you are one of the devoted parishioners who spend time in the Adoration Chapel, or take communion to someone in a nursing home. Perhaps you are a person who, without even realizing it, sets a good example for others, and may lead them on a path closer to God and to our church. All of these things are a very important part of stewardship.

Our monetary donations are also important as they allow us to maintain the physical church and school. They support those who are called to the religious life and help fund activities that keep our church family active.

True stewardship should be a part of each day and we should all continue to find new ways to return a portion of the blessings we receive.