

THE EVERYDAY STEWARD

By Katie Price

When You Have Nothing to Place in the Basket

I recently had a conversation with a fellow colleague regarding stewardship of treasure. The tone of the conversation was one of anxiety. See for many of us, the conversation of “stewardship” is synonymous with money. People don't talk about money. Many of us were raised to not discuss money publicly. If we only define stewardship as money, how can we openly talk about generosity? Maybe, stewardship isn't just about an envelope in the Offertory basket, but something more?

When I try and teach my daughter about contributing to the Offertory it is not easy. Not because I am uncomfortable explaining why she should give away what little she has to those in need, but because I don't place an envelope in the basket. So much of what we do as parents is leading by example. However, I don't have anything to place in the basket, because I contribute to the Offertory online. Why do I bring this up? I bring it up to draw attention to the deeper meaning of the Offertory. Is it just a return device for an envelope or are we being invited to participate in something more meaningful?

One of the greatest gifts we all possess is generosity. Generosity is not based on the amount, but the willingness to give. I grew up with “Kid's envelopes,” which were never about raising more money, but were about teaching generosity. We don't have those in many places anymore, so how are our children learning generosity? How are they learning that it is not how much you have, but your willingness to give? I teach my daughter that a good disciple and steward is someone willing to prayerfully discern each Sunday how they might pray more (time with God), serve more (talents), and give more (treasure). The Offertory is more than an envelope.

Remember when God told his disciples to drop their nets and follow Him? He meant drop everything...not just the fish in the nets that provided for their livelihood, but their daily life, friends, hobbies, all of it. The offertory is our opportunity to drop our nets and give it all to His Church on earth. The spirit of generosity lives in all of us, how we express it might look differently among us, but we are called to express generosity in some way. Consider this, if Jesus was presenting you with a basket this Sunday, what would you put in it?

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http://legacy.archchicago.org/departments/stewardship_dev/stewardship_dev.shtm