

September 3, 2003

Dear Pastors, Parish Directors, Deacons and Stewardship Coordinators:

Again I write to you on the subject of Stewardship. Throughout this past year we have focused on Stewardship first as an invitation to prayer and then as an invitation to service. Now in this third phase we look at Stewardship as an invitation to handle responsibly and generously the financial means given us by a generous God. In a spirit of thanksgiving we ask ourselves, "How can we make a return to the Lord for all that God has given us?" (Psalm 116).

Because this phase of our Stewardship Thrust focuses on the use of money, there will be those who think that this ultimately is the whole reason for the Diocese's emphasis on Stewardship. You know it is not. You know that we have chosen Stewardship as one more way of inviting ourselves and our people to a change of heart, to a deeper devotion to the Lord, to making the Gospel message more central to our way of life. But it just so happens that Jesus, time after time in the Gospel, calls his disciples' attention to the use of money.

The weekend of October 25-26 will be the high point of this phase of our Stewardship Thrust.

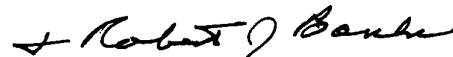
I urge each priest, parish director and deacon to use the homily on that weekend to speak about Stewardship as it affects the way we use our financial resources. In the Gospel, the blind man asks Jesus that he may see. Each of us needs help to see the use of money the way Jesus sees it.

In the packet enclosed with this letter you will find examples of witness talks designed to assist your parishioners with their personal reflections on what sharing can mean to them and their families. Please plan to schedule similar witness talks after the Eucharist on the weekend of November 1-2.

International Stewardship Day has been scheduled for November 9. It is my hope that we can develop a Diocesan-wide way for parishioners to make real their Stewardship intentions for the future. You will hear more about that.

Thank you for all you are doing to make the Stewardship Thrust a spiritual renewal for ourselves and our people.

Sincerely yours in Christ,



Most Reverend Robert J. Banks
Bishop of Green Bay

Enclosures

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