

# The GOOD STEWARD

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## Stewardship in Hard Times

*by Fr. Tim Church*

Perhaps surprisingly we are a little more conscious of our stewardship choices during an economic downturn. We may be more aware of our dependence on God as we see the economy slide. We can get pretty puffed up when we are making money, hand over fist. But those times are far distant over the horizon now. We are afraid, some irrationally and some based on good sense, and since the monster that lives under the bed has teeth and is big, we may find ourselves praying more.

There are obviously some who have been able to maintain their stewardship giving. There may also be others that are actually giving for the first time, seeing the importance now of doing the right thing. There are others whose income is either greatly reduced or is nothing. If we have been like the ant in Aesop's fable then we are well prepared to handle a good many months without feeling much pain. Most of us are prudent to a degree but the "how long?" question is a big one. Fortunately, while the economy is obviously damaged, it is not dead. There are still too many cars in the commute down Central Expressway. And we know by now that if we act dead, then we will be. Our stewardship is part of the fabric of a Christian who is functioning well and if it is now paid attention, then so be it!

There are also some true heroes when it comes to hard times and stewardship choices. One of the great stories of hope in the Old Testament is that of the prophet Elijah who visits the poor widow of Zarephath (1Ki 17:10). He asks her to share something to eat. She is agreeable but tells the prophet that all she has is meager and that after she and her son eat they expect to die. But Elijah promises that she will always have what she needs. Miraculously her provisions lasts for a year and as their drought is alleviated, they do indeed survive, even prosper.

Perhaps we cannot presume that God will provide a miracle. Miracles are gifts. What God has established as the fundamental foundation of our relationship with him

is his care for us. A vast majority of us all will clearly attest that we have never gone without what we need.

The widow in the Gospel is a much more precise representation of one who fits the Christian model of reacting to adversity. Jesus watches others put large sums of money into the Temple treasury, but the widow puts in all that she has, only two small coins. It is not beyond our imagination to assume that this gift is similar to that of the widow of Zeraphath. The difference is that we are forced to use our imagination. We do not know what happened to the woman of the Gospel. Such a circumstance of not knowing what our future holds is a great (and perhaps grave) test of faith. Such opportunity to become faithful comes with adversity. It is our faith that is enriched by the challenge of hard times.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Fr. Tim Church".

NEWS

Most likely by the time you receive this you will have heard something of our job search support group, what we are calling Career Alliance. We have assembled an incredible team of supportive parishioners. Please check the web site and the bulletin for information about services being offered and meeting times, or call the parish office (972.727.1177) for more information.

Please be sure to fill out a pledge card for our Bishop's Appeal. This is formerly known as the CCA, but is the same fund that supports outreach and education in the Diocese of Dallas. During difficult times the Diocese is feeling a great deal of strain on resources. Please help. You can obtain a pledge card by calling the parish office or make a secure pledge online at [www.cathdal.org](http://www.cathdal.org). In the field for "Parish", be sure and list St. Jude so we get credited for your pledge. A link to this online form can also be found on the homepage of our website at [www.stjudeparish.com](http://www.stjudeparish.com).