

The GOOD STEWARD

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For the Members of St. Jude Catholic Church

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Being Part of the Work of the Parish

by Fr. Tim Church

Sometimes it seems that the work of the parish goes on no matter what. The weather turns bad and we are sure that the accomplishment of the work of offering the Mass will fall to only a few. The first Mass is lightly attended and it seems that our suspicions were confirmed. In the end the numbers are the same as an average Sunday! The same is true for the finances of the parish. We might expect because of the down turn in the economy or some other reason that a smaller number of people are giving less. That is true but not to the degree that we would expect.

The one truism concerning evaluating the success of our projects is that in the end they all seem to work themselves out. We continue to be timid in our expectations, otherwise known as being fiscally conservative. I wonder, however if that is not the greatest obstacle we face. A miracle is something that has its origin in a surprise. God does them all the time. It is not just that the supernatural is involved but that it does not go according to our expectations. Finally, in the end the project is accomplished and we simply forget our doubts. Perhaps it would be good to remember the doubts in order to learn from them. We projected failure or scaled back because of trends. Perhaps, we even hoped for failure so that we could be proven right. Failure is easier than success. Pessimism is easier to justify. To believe in God's intervention is hard, especially in these times. To believe in the combined force of God and people, well, the devil most assuredly does not want us to remember the way in which God has always carried us through.

The real question for us is not, "will our parish and our diocese and our nation (!) be successful?" Of course we will. We have always been successful in the past, not because we attribute this to our own strength

but because we know God is with us. What we do is in response to His plan, not ours. If it were up to us we would be looking for the easy road, for the next vacation. The question is not about the success of the parish. It is about our personal involvement. Will we be involved? Will each of us be able to say with God's help we did that? Will we be able to stand before the throne of God and respond favorably to the questions concerning our being part of the parish's work, or the diocese, or making our nation strong. Or did we simply let the opportunity slip by because someone said "yes", even though we said "no".

There is a pledge card included as part of this Good Steward mailing. You know what to do. If this is your first time to say "yes," give at a level that will bear the fruit of growing in God's grace. Become a part of the work of the parish.

Notice that the pledge card represents three funds. The general operations are the everyday expenses: salaries and electricity, etc. The next two funds concern our building, the "Building Trust" and the "Capital Campaign." The Building Trust is debt payment on the Church building and the Capital Campaign is the new construction. In addition to the General operations of the parish which all of us use, we should at least choose one of the other funds in order that we have a share in advancing this work.

With God all things are possible.



Fr. Tim