

## Pastor's Column

### **Gratitude: A Lifetime of Christian Stewardship— Time, Talent, and Treasure Joyfully Given**

This weekend we begin our special focus on and celebration of Christian Stewardship. Throughout this month we are reminded that Christian Stewardship is Discipleship, it is the way in which we live out our lives because we are followers of Jesus.

In doing so, as we give praise to God in our words, and in our actions in this Faith Community of St. Thomas More, we demonstrate our gratitude.

Fr. Henri Nouwen, in *The Return of the Prodigal Son*, talks about gratitude in this way:

*The discipline of gratitude is the explicit effort to acknowledge that all that I am and have is given to me as a gift of love, a gift to be celebrated with joy. There is always the choice between resentment and gratitude because God has appeared in my darkness, urged me to come home, and declared in a voice filled with affection: 'You are with me always, and all I have is yours.' Indeed, I can choose...to lament about the many misfortunes which have plagued me in the past, and thereby wrap myself up in my resentment. But I don't have to do this. There is the option to look into the eyes of the One who came out to search for me and see therein that all I am and all I have is pure gift calling for gratitude. The choice for gratitude rarely comes without some real effort. But each time I make it, the next choice is a little easier, a little freer, a little less self-conscious. Because every gift I acknowledge reveals another and another, until finally even the most normal, obvious, and seemingly mundane event or encounter proves to be filled with grace.*

As Catholics, each week we come together to celebrate the Eucharist. The Eucharist is Jesus freely and totally giving Himself to us. "Take and eat. This is My Body. Take and drink. This is My Blood."

The One who becomes Eucharist for us challenges us to become Eucharist for others: "Do this in memory of Me!" We are called to become what we eat and what we drink.

Once we come to this moment of faith that Jesus is God's gift freely given to us, our only response can be one of gratitude in which we give ourselves as gift in joyous response. The gifts of time, talent, and treasure become the means in which we say "Thank You!"

Throughout this month of January, we reflect, in a special way, upon Christian Stewardship as a way of life, the way in which we give thanks to God for all that we are and all that we have.

Our very life is pure gift! Once we come to that realization, we are set free to live life joyously as the sons and daughters of God!

Fr. Mike