

Your Stewardship of Christ's Church

Jesus Christ: the Way, the Truth, and the Life ~

Recently I reread a little booklet called *God Reveals the Six Classes of People and the Reality of Hell* by A.J. Marcus. In it, A.J. quotes a seer from a century ago named Josefa Menendez. Amongst Josefa's claimed revelations, one of them was about the six classes of people in their relationship with God. I was inspired to reflect upon those six classes of people from the early 20th Century and adjust them according to 21st Century Catholic Christians. Take a look at these and see where you think you mostly fit, and if you would have described them any differently.

1. Jesus Christ is so important to them that they would give up family, home, possessions, and reputation to serve Christ in His Church, if that is what Jesus was asking of them. They are trying to completely surrender to Christ.
2. Attends Mass on all Sundays and Holy Days of Obligation, perhaps occasionally a weekday Mass. Goes to Confession at least a few times a year. Prays at home, sometimes with other family members. Tries to observe the moral law even at some sacrifice to relationships. Is a steward of the Church with their time, talent, and treasure, but is not willing to renounce everything for Christ. Still holding something back.
3. Attends Mass regularly but not on all Sundays and Holy Days of Obligation. Prays at home sometimes but almost never with other family members. May volunteer for something in the Church. Has children enrolled in faith formation classes but never evangelizes them at home, and may let them stop attending Mass before they are adults. Generally, tries to live the commandments but will compromise them to maintain relationships. Beyond what I just mentioned, their lifestyle looks like that of non-Catholics.
4. Attends Mass irregularly. May have kids in faith formation classes. Will honor their kids wishes to not attend Mass because it's too much hassle fighting them on it. Frequently not registered in a parish. Makes no sacrifices for Christ and His Church. Has a conscience but only lives the commandments they want to. Confession is usually years apart. Lifestyle and priorities are exactly the same as non-Catholics.
5. Indifferent toward God. Does not attend Mass except for maybe Christmas and Easter. Does not live the commandments.

6. Is an enemy of Christ, His Church, and those who would evangelize Him.

I want you in heaven. I also want your loved ones in heaven. In order for the latter to happen, we need to work on being holy, for others are affected by our example for good or ill. Perhaps you've heard this saying: "Give me a holy priest, and I'll show you devout parishioners; give me a devout priest, and I'll show you good parishioners; give me a good priest, and I'll show you so-so parishioners; give me a so-so priest, and I'll show you bad parishioners; give me a bad priest, and he'll show his parishioners the way to hell." To be fair, those statements apply to all of us: "Give me a holy spouse and I'll show you . . . ; Give me holy parents and I'll show you . . . ; Give me holy grandparents and I'll show you . . . ; Give me a holy parishioner and I'll show you . . ." What each of us do with our lives has a profound impact on our relationship with God—and the relationship others have with God—whether we can see it or not.

Serving God through His Church with our time, talent, and treasure is a blessing and responsibility that Jesus Christ has bestowed upon each of us. The blessing is in our own sanctification, we receive in the measure we give, and there is no greater joy than communion with God and eternal life with Him. The opposite is true too: there is no greater misery than separation from God, especially in the life to come.

To those of you who are good stewards of Our Lord's Church—thank you so much. Your sacrifices are doing you and others more good than you realize.

You and I were made to be saints, for Jesus says, "Be perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect," (Mt 5:48) and we hear again from St. Paul, "to the holy people of Jesus Christ, who are called to take their place among all the saints everywhere" (1 Cor 1:2). One day when we get to heaven, if not before, we will be saints. Yet many will not make it to heaven if people like us don't do what we can to share our faith through our time, talent, and treasure in this life. That's not an exaggeration. In heaven we will be made aware of all the souls that made it there because of the *sacrifices* we made for our faith and the Church in this life. Likewise, we will be made aware of all the souls who didn't make it (potentially our own) because of our poor example and lack of effort. If God is our highest priority, and He should be, then shouldn't our day planners, calendars, and checkbooks reflect that?

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Stewardship is the practice of considering and treating all things on earth, including one's own life (time, talent, and treasure) as belonging to God, and oneself as the manager or 'steward' of all that belongs to God (Mt 25:14-30, Lk 12:42-48 & 16:1-13, 1 Cor 4:1-2, 1 Pt 4:10). God gifts us with the stewardship of His Church for His greater glory and the salvation of souls, not the other way around. And this is a precious gift that we can only take advantage of in this life, not in the one to come.

If you are registered at Holy Redeemer, St. Thomas Aquinas, or Our Lady Star of the Sea, you received a letter this week introducing you to this year's annual stewardship drive. Please take the time to read it and fill out the stewardship brochure. If you are not registered, by filling out the stewardship brochure we'll get you registered. It takes all of us contributing to make Our Lord's Kingdom a reality here and now so please fill out a stewardship brochure.

If you haven't done so already through the mailing we sent you at your home, take time now to commit to being a steward of the faith by going to our website and clicking on the Stewardship button, or fill out the brochure we sent you in the mail or in the pews by sending it or scanning the QR code. You can also scan the QR code in this pastor's column. Please prayerfully consider committing to at least one thing. More is better, yet commit to at least one thing. Whatever you commit too, it will help you and others grow in their walk with the Lord.



Of course, stewardship is also about tithing. The Church would simply cease to exist without our financial sacrifices. Money manager Dave Ramsey says, "Tithing was created for our benefit. It exists to teach us how to keep God first in our lives and how to be unselfish people. Unselfish people make better husbands, wives, [parents], friends, relatives, employees, and employers. God is trying to teach us how to prosper over time."

(<https://www.ramseysolutions.com/budgeting/daves-advice-on-tithing-and-giving>).

Prosper into eternity and help others while you're at it. God has given us everything and is so generous that He lets us keep 90%. Yet, 10% belongs to Him. Please remember to continue moving toward Our Lord's expectation of a 10%

tithe of your annual income to His Church: 5% to our parish, 1% to the Annual Catholic Appeal, and 4% to other Catholic charities. If you are not already at a 10% tithe, then take a 1% step this year toward that goal; for example: if you're currently giving only 1% of your annual income to the Church, commit to increase that to 2%, if 9% then 10%, etc. We receive in the measure we give. Trust God. He will take care of you.

Again, I want to thank all of you who do give in so many meaningful ways. The varied ministries between our three communities attest to the sacrifices that many of you have already made for so many. It is because of your sacrifices that we have been able to grow our opportunities for discipleship. Please renew your commitment to the stewardship of the Church and Holy Redeemer, St. Thomas Aquinas, and Our Lady Star of the Sea by volunteering your time, talent, and treasure; and continue to grow in your faith and to help others grow in theirs. I thank you for your continued stewardship of our parish family and the Church at large.

May Almighty God Bless You,

Fr. Thomas Nathe

