



VIRTUE CORNER

Last month we began our four-month examination of the Lumen Core Value of Faith. Four Lumen virtues help to make us men of faith: spiritual drive, prayer, stewardship, and confidence in God. Last month we discussed prayer, which is as a response of love, involving communion and communication with God, as well as response of justice: it is just that I give him glory, praise him and talk to him. This month we look at stewardship, the second virtue that comes under the core value of faith.

You might ask what stewardship has to do with being people of faith. Quite a bit. In fact, it has *everything* to do with faith. Stewardship has to do with managing goods that someone else has entrusted you with, recognizing their true owner, and caring for them according to the owner's desire and intent. Stewardship is about respect, honesty and trust in God.

As creatures of the creator or children of our heavenly Father, all that we have comes from him. Everything is entrusted to us as a gift and an expression of love. God cares enough about us and trusts us enough to share what he most loves with us. He gives us the gift of life, containing our freedom and talents and our particular history. He leaves us the gift of time and energy to invest and spend for his glory, for the good of others and our fulfillment. He grants us the power to co-create through loving as he does. As a married person, we are entrusted with the tremendous gift of our spouse and our children, asking that we be good stewards and accompany them on the road to heaven, and valuing their company on the lifelong endeavor of good stewardship. In caring for them, we mirror the ways of God, who personally cares for and invests in each of us!

At the end of our time on earth, he will invite us to have an honest conversation with him and give an account of what we did with all the gifts received. Did we respect the intent of the giver? Did we make them bear more fruit by our free and intentional focus?

**He is no fool who gives what he cannot keep,
to gain what he cannot lose.**

Jim Elliot



GOSPEL REFLECTION (30 MIN)

“The Apostles’ Take on Stewardship”

His master said to the steward, ‘Well done, good and faithful servant! You were faithful over a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Share your master’s joy!’ – *Matthew 25:21*

Every generous act and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights; with Him there is no variation or shadow cast by turning. – *James 1:17*

Whatever you do, do it enthusiastically, as something done for the Lord and not for men, knowing that you will receive the reward of an inheritance from the Lord. You serve the Lord Christ. – *Colossians 3:23-2*

Above all, let your love for one another be intense, because love covers a multitude of sins. Be hospitable to one another without complaining. As each one has received a gift, use it to serve one another as good stewards of God’s varied grace. – *1 Peter 4:8 - 10*

Remember this: The person who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and the person who sows generously will also reap generously. Each person should do as he has decided in his heart—not reluctantly or out of necessity, for God loves a cheerful giver. – *2 Corinthians 9:6-7*

Questions for Discussion:

1. Which passage strikes you the most? Why?
2. Sts. James, Paul and Peter all highlight the call to generosity and stewardship. What are some of the elements of stewardship that all of these passages have in common?
3. Which passage do you find most challenging as you consider the type of stewardship Jesus asks of you?
4. Considering these passages, where do you feel you are a good steward with your time, talent and treasure? In which area(s) can you still grow?
5. For a Christian, what does it mean to be “generous enough”? How would Jesus answer that?

The development of economic activity and growth in production are meant to provide for the needs of human beings. Economic life is not meant solely to multiply goods produced and increase profit or power; it is ordered first of all to the service of persons, of the whole man, and of the entire human community. Economic activity, conducted according to its own proper methods, is to be exercised within the limits of the moral order, in keeping with social justice so as to correspond to God’s plan for man.

(Catechism of the Catholic Church, #2426)





CASE DISCUSSION (30 MIN)

2 ways to go about it. Read the Case and discuss afterwards how it can apply to your life of Faith. Or ask a member to voluntarily offer their challenges in living out Stewardship at home, in the work place or in their Lumen action (volunteer work). The circle can offer some personal experiences on how they have confronted and resolved similar difficulties.

Discuss some practical ways that you and your wife live a stewardship way of life and how you teach your children these lessons. Realize that as a person blessed with means, part of my holiness and spiritual growth is tied to generosity. The following points can help to aid your thinking.

A stewardship way of life involves the following:

- **Becoming more and more aware that everything is gift and blessing:** This means accepting the biblical truth that all that we are and have is a gift from God and properly speaking we own nothing. Scripture reminds us that we come into the world with nothing and we leave the world with nothing (see Job 1:21). A stewardship way of life involves recognizing God as the sole creator and owner of all that we are and have, and accepting the fact that we are merely the stewards or managers of God's gifts and blessings. Our job or mission is to manage and use wisely and responsibly all that God has placed in our care.
- **Growing in generosity:** As we grow into a stewardship way of life, our lifestyle becomes more and more permeated by generosity. A life of generosity is a clear sign that we do believe and accept the biblical truth that God owns it all. Conversely, when we hoard our gifts and talents, we assign ownership of our good fortune to ourselves and not to God, doing with them as we please.
- **Deepening in our sense of responsibility:** As we seek to develop a stewardship way of life, we are aware that one day we will have to account for our stewardship here on earth. How well did we use God's gifts to bless the lives of others?

Questions for Reflection:

1. **Stewardship of Time:** Time is a very precious gift. When it comes to being a good steward of time, the critical question is: What do we make time for? Everyone is given the same amount of time, 24 hours each day, 168 hours each week. God's question to us is: How do we choose to use our time?
 - a. To what extent do we squander TIME watching senseless TV shows?
 - b. To what extent do we use excessive amounts of time on recreation?
 - c. To what extent do we use time to foster our relationship with God or to volunteer in some ministry that blesses others?
 - d. How about Lumen mentoring?
2. **Stewardship of Our Abilities and Talents:** Are you sitting on your talents and not using them to bless others? In one of his parables, Jesus has a severe warning for those who bury their talents. Failing to share our talents is like stealing from our communities. Talents and abilities are given to us primarily to bless others.
3. **Stewardship of Our Treasure:** Am I giving back the first fruits of what God blesses me with financially? How intentional am I about not hoarding, but living in real trust and being generous?



Resources:

<http://www.ascensioncatholic.net/Living-a-Stewardship-Way-of-Life>

<http://christianstewardshipnetwork.com/stewardship-ministry/christian-stewardship-quotes/>

Stewardship in Practice

In Family

- Stick to a budget
- Invest personally in the faith, character, and intellectual formation of your children
- Take very good care of your spousal relationship
- Make family decisions based on what is best for each member's all-around development
- Live simply but with dignity
- Put the family at the service of others
- Include financial support of the Church and works of evangelization as a primary component of the family budget
- Constantly increase your knowledge of and love for your Christian faith

Stewardship Does...

In Business

- Strive to make every resource as productive as reasonably possible
- Strive to produce as much wealth as reasonably possible
- Strive to serve real social needs
- Use profits to better the lives of business members
- Use profits to increase the effectiveness of the business
- Use profits to better society as a whole
- Use personal talent in the pursuit of worthwhile business goals
- Constantly strengthen your intellectual capital

The Wisdom of the Ages on Stewardship

We make a living by what we get, but we make a life by what we give. (Winston Churchill)

Do not value money for any more nor any less than its worth; it is a good servant but a bad master. (Alexandre Dumas)

He is rich or poor according to what he is, not according to what he has. (Henry Ward Beecher)

The greatest lesson you might ever learn in this life is this: it is not about you. (Shannon L. Alder)

Time, talent and treasure are so intimately related to the possessor, one cannot give them without giving of oneself. (Mark Haydu ☺)

Abundance isn't God's provision for me to live in luxury. It's his provision for me to help others live. God entrusts me with his money not to build my kingdom on earth, but to building his Kingdom in heaven. (Randy Alcorn)



UPCOMING EVENTS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

Manhattan Chapter

- Leadership Circles:
 - Greenwich February 12 March 12
 - Manhattan February 20 March 26
 - Rye February 13 March 13
 - Summit February 13 March 13
 - Naples February 4th March 4th

Atlanta

- Leadership Circle February 17
- Retreat February 17 - 19

Houston

- Leadership Circle February 19 March 28
- Speaker Series March 28th

Chicago

- Leadership Circle February 20 March 20

WDC

- Leadership Circle February 5 March 5

Nationally:

- National Retreat in New York City – Fall 2018
- Pilgrimage to the Holy Land June 1 to 10
- Pilgrimage to Rome – June 11 to 17



Lumen Core Values Self-Assessment (10 minutes)

Core Values Assessment. Spend 10 minutes in silence assessing positive and negative examples of how you express your faith in Stewardship in your relationship with others and God. The below quadrant can help in jotting down some of your assessment as well as a tool for the whole Lumen Circle and how you can let it be a leaven in your life.

What struck me in this circle and how I might apply it to my THINKING. What CRITICAL ISSUES am I facing? What is the biggest CHALLENGES with these issues I face and what OPPORTINITIES does it present.

Prayer:

Family:

Business:

Lumen Action:

What ACTION STEPS can I take now or long term? Develop a concrete resolution for how you can improve in your efforts to exercise Christian charity in you interactions with others during the next month. Your resolution should be a specific action or activity that is easily measured.

