



The Steward's Harvest

We are Sower. We are Seed.

Ordinary Time / Ash Wednesday 2009
Vol. III

The Paperless Steward

This is the last issue of *The Steward's Harvest* that will be printed in the usual manner and distributed through the mail. Over the last three years we have built up a sizeable email mailing list, and it continues to grow. Beginning with the next issue, planned for distribution in April, we will distribute *The Steward's Harvest* exclusively by email, as well as make it available for download from the Internet at www.colsdioc.org. Click on the Stewardship logo, and resources, to find the link to the newsletter.

To subscribe to the electronic version, please contact us at Devmailbox@colsdioc.org. Thank you.

Stewardship of Our Emotional Garden

What, Me Worry?

- by George L. Gugle IV

Think of the ravens. They do not sow or reap; they have no storehouses and no barns; yet God feeds them. And how much more you are worth than the birds! Can any of you, however much you worry, add a single cubit to your span of life?

If a very small thing is beyond your powers, why worry about the rest?

—Luke 12: 22-26

For the cynics among us, this passage from Luke presents a challenge. "That's easy for Jesus to say!" they complain, "He never had to make a payroll!"

I respectfully disagree.

Jesus was raised the son of a carpenter. At that time, sons and daughters worked closely with their fathers and mothers from an early age. For the child the overwhelming desire was to be like the parent. For the parents, this was how the children were taught a trade and to manage the family's affairs.

Bearing this in mind, then, I have no doubt that Jesus watched closely as Joseph . . . promoted his business, bid for jobs – winning some and losing others, struggled to complete projects on time, under budget, and at the agreed upon price, made changes and corrections when they were warranted, agreed to terms for payment and delivery of the finished project, or, in the extreme, sought redress when either Joseph or the client disagreed. And then worried about when the next job was coming along.

All of these business procedures remain virtually unchanged to this day. Only the tools of the trade and those used on the administrative side have changed. Likewise, all of us — individuals, families, and businesses alike — are subject to the winds of change and uncertainty. Those winds, as history has shown, can blow softly, or harshly, or as we have seen over the past three months, can blow with the force of a hurricane. And leave worry in its wake.

Uncertainty and change—both gradual and catastrophic—are the only certainties in life. The steward recognizes this and responds accordingly—with a positive attitude and smile.

Have no anxiety at all, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, make your requests known to God.
—Philippians 4:6

But that's easier said than done, isn't it? Worry is part of our emotional make up. It keeps us up at night. It leads to all manner of physical and psychological ailments and conditions. For parents, worry is delivered along with the child. It is another of the certainties in life, like death and taxes – two things, incidentally, about which we worry. The question then for stewards is how to steward our worries — how to recognize and overcome worry, and deal with it effectively so that we can break its hold on us.

With the help of Dale Carnegie, I would like to recommend some helpful hints to recognizing and overcoming worry that have worked for me. Carnegie is best known for his book, *How to Win Friends and Influence People*, as well as the self-help training course he pioneered. What many may not know is that Carnegie penned a follow up book that was first published in 1944 – *How to Stop Worrying and Start Living*.

I have found this book to be eminently helpful in breaking the worry habit, and I recommend it to everyone who is constantly in worry's grasp. It is filled, page after page, with useful, real-world advice to overcoming worry told in the words of many well-known men and women of Carnegie's day.

Of all the tips and tricks outlined in the book, I still refer to and apply those that Carnegie called the **Fundamental Principles for Overcoming Worry**,

1. Live in "day tight compartments"

The heart of this concept is in the scripture "This is the day that the Lord has made, let us rejoice and be glad in it." It does no good to linger over the things in the past that cannot be changed, nor over the future. Rather we would do well to

keep our focus firmly in the present day, hour and minute, and concentrate on the things we can do and achieve right now, this instant, so as to minimize the effects of worry.

2. How to face trouble:

- A. Ask yourself, "What is the worst that can possibly happen?"
- B. Prepare to accept the worst.
- C. Try to improve upon the worst.

The point here is to take control of my personal situation at this minute, not sit and wait for the inevitable. I recognize that I have been presented with a challenge, and then ask myself "What am I prepared to do?"

3. Remind ourselves of the exorbitant price we can pay for worry in terms of our health.

It runs the gamut from asthma to zits! Many of the conditions frequently attributed to worry are serious—ulcers, high blood pressure and high cholesterol, and heart disease. A good way to keep this in perspective is to refer back to the scripture passage that opens this article.

4. The Perfect Way to Conquer Worry – Pray

As stewards, we are only managing and taking care of the many gifts with which God has blessed us. Should not we then maintain contact with the Father as a way of letting Him know how we are using His gifts, as well as asking for direction in how we can continue to use them wisely and well? Keeping God in the loop, then, can help us improve the odds of whatever sort of situation in which we find ourselves, thereby helping to keep worry at bay.

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Stewardship in Small Steps

- by Deacon Marion Smithberger

As we begin the season of Lent, a time when we examine how we have been living our lives, we look at where we have been falling short of the mark and we make a commitment to do better. Are we in fact living the life of discipleship to which we have been called? "To each individual the manifestation of the Spirit is given for some benefit" (1 Cor. 12:17).

During Lent, we fast, pray and meditate; repent, do penance, and seek reconciliation. We deliberately slow down our life to reflect on how we are living the Gospel, keeping the commandments and being good stewards with the gifts that God has given us.

As has been said many times, stewardship is not a single act or collection of acts but a way of life; it takes time to develop just like any other good habit such as eating right or getting regular exercise. We try to see where we are, personally, and then discern the next small step we can take.

Why do we say, "small step"? An easy mistake is to try to do too much too intensely. Sometimes we approach stewardship like the man who is out of shape and decides he needs to run a marathon; although a laudable long term goal, in the short run it is beyond his capacity and very soon, he quits out of discouragement. The corrective action was right but the method was self-defeating. We are not going to become the model of Christian stewardship overnight by our own doing but through humble persistence over a lifetime through the power of the Holy Spirit.

For many of us stewardship is a group activity. As members of a family, our resources, time and money, are held in a common trust, and not completely ours to use and distribute as we see fit. So it is important to talk about stewardship within the context of our family. For example it would be commendable for the father of the family to lead by example and be generous with something that is his, such as giving up the cost of a fishing trip to support a charitable cause as opposed to committing the family to donate money which had

been saved for the family vacation.

For many of us, stewardship as a way of life also begins in the family. We start with being good stewards of our own time, talent and treasure within the friendly confines of our family. Are we generous and kind to each other?

The seeds of stewardship begin to germinate around the family dinner table where our opinions and values are most clearly demonstrated. Ideally our individual generosity and kindness will positively affect each other and in the cocoon of the family we will challenge each other to higher levels of stewardship. Hopefully we will discern, as a family, the next small stewardship step; we trust that the mustard seed of faith will grow. What is amazing is that there is opportunity for every one at every level to give something as is demonstrated by the sacrifice of the widow's mite.

The season of Lent is a time in the liturgical calendar to take a small spiritual step forward. As we probe our sinfulness and focus on the hope that is Christ, it will almost certainly lead us toward a reaching out of ourselves to more service. We can use Lent to begin the habit of being better stewards through a series of small steps. Gradually we will see the impact that our additional small kindnesses and generosity will have on our family and before we know it, love gradually emanates beyond the walls of our home and starts to affect our workplace, our school and our community.

Each of us lives our stewardship differently. Nurturing our stewardship, even in these tough financial times, is always part of living the Gospel. Our spreading the Word, our evangelization, is amplified by good stewardship. We are not known as Christians because of how we talk of love but how we love — one small step at a time. ✠

Deacon Marion Smithberger was ordained by Bishop Frederick Campbell to the Permanent Diaconate November 20, 2008. Assigned to St. Timothy Parish in Upper Arlington, he is also Executive Director of the Columbus Bar Foundation

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One such prayer to keep within reach for tough situations is the *Prayer of St. Francis of Assisi*. Carnegie himself cited it as a beautiful prayer especially if one has lost faith and longs for it to be restored.

It is unrealistic to think that we will ever truly banish worry from our lives, especially if our 401K is in free-fall, or if a loved one is in the midst

of a life-changing catastrophe. I can assure you, though, that using the concepts listed above, can go a long way to helping you maintain a level of calm through which the Holy Spirit can help you work through the situation.

Besides, as we have read in scripture, "If God is for us then, who can be against us?" ✠

Carnegie, Dale; *How to Stop Worrying and Start Living*, 1944, Simon and Schuster; New York, NY.

Prayer of St. Francis of Assisi

Lord, make me an instrument of Thy peace;
Where there is hatred, let me sow love;

Where there is injury, pardon;

Where there is doubt, faith;

Where there is despair, hope;

Where there is darkness, light;

And where there is sadness, joy.

O Divine Master,

Grant that I may not so much seek to be consoled
as to console;

To be understood, as to understand;

To be loved, as to love;

For it is in giving that we receive,

It is in pardoning that we are pardoned,

And it is in dying that we are born to Eternal Life.

Amen.



Upcoming Stewardship Events

June 24 – 26, 2009: *Loaves and Fishes Living Christian Stewardship Conference*, Hilton Cincinnati Netherland Plaza. For information and registration information: www.osvelopes.com, and click on "Register Now for LCS Cincinnati." ✠

Youth & Young Adult Happenings Throughout the Diocese

February 27, 2009 *Young Adult Lenten Fish Fry*, St. Michael Parish, Worthington 6:30PM.

March 7 & 8, 2009 *Diocesan Youth Rally*, Fisher Catholic HS in Lancaster. For information: www.cdeducation.org/oym/rally/index.html.

March 21, 2009 *Young Adult Lenten Retreat*, St. Mary Parish, Marion; 9:30AM — 5PM; Retreat Director — Fr. Joshua Wagner, parochial vicar of St. Mary Church, Marion. Register by March 18, 2009. For registration information, contact Kelly Lavelle in the Office of Youth and Young adult Ministry at klavelle@cdeducation.org (614) 241-2565.

April 1, 2009 *XLT*, Our Lady of Perpetual Help Parish, Grove City. Speaker — Fr. Tony Ricard. For more information and schedule: www.xltcolumbus.com. ✠