

Knights of the Southern Cross - Australia

“STEWARDSHIP – THE WAY OF THE DISCIPLE” **Formation Program for 2011**

**A reflection on Christian Stewardship based on the Pastoral Letter
“Stewardship – A Disciple’s Response”**

STEWARDSHIP – THE WAY OF THE DISCIPLE

For over twenty years, the Catholic Church has been gradually rediscovering the values of Christian Stewardship and its integral part in the Christian life.

In 1992 the United States Conference of Bishops issued a Pastoral Letter on Stewardship “Stewardship – A Disciple’s Response” and this has been introduced to the Church of Australia & Oceania by Bishop Peter Ingham, Bishop of Wollongong. This text provides both the means and the challenge to look at Stewardship with new eyes.

Reflection on the insights of this document during 2011 will provide a way of broadening our understanding of our part in God’s work here on earth and enable us to nurture, deepen, and celebrate our role as disciples of the Lord.

Text used for the Programme: “STEWARDSHIP A Disciple’s Response” a Pastoral Letter on Stewardship. United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, 2002. Oceania Edition.

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KNIGHTS OF THE SOUTHERN CROSS - AUSTRALIA

FORMATION PROGRAMME 2011

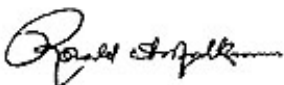
FOREWORD

In 1992 the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops published a Pastoral Letter on Stewardship called “Stewardship: A Disciple’s Response”. In a Preface to the recently published Oceania Edition of this Pastoral Letter, Bishop Ingham, of Wollongong, states: “This pastoral letter of the American Bishops has inspired thousands of people in parishes and dioceses around the world to embrace the biblical and theological concept of ‘being God’s steward’.

By 2006 two Stewardship Institutes were conducted at North Sydney at which fifteen Australian Dioceses were represented. In Brisbane in 2010 there was a workshop on Stewardship as part of the Pray 2010 Programme. Many Parishes and Dioceses are introducing the concept of Stewardship. In 2011, the Australia and New Zealand Stewardship Network will conduct four major events for formation in Stewardship. (More information follows this Foreword).

The Knights of the Southern Cross may well support this approach to counteract some of the secularising influences that affect us today. But they will only be able to give their support if they know what Stewardship is about. The National Executive has endorsed that reflection on Christian Stewardship be the topic of the Formation Programme for 2011.

I again thank Sister Anne McMillan, Coordinator of the Pastoral Ministry Office of the Ballarat Diocese, for her willingness to help us out by putting together this Programme. I pray that it will be accepted and used by members of the Knights of the Southern Cross and will give them new motivation as they continue their work to bring about the objects of the Order.

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Bishop Ronald A Mulkeams
National Chaplain.

INFORMATION REGARDING STEWARDSHIP IN AUSTRALIA

The origins of stewardship are deeply embedded in the Hebrew Scriptures and in a specific sense in the teachings of Jesus in the Gospel. It was the development of a US Bishop's Pastoral Letter: *Stewardship A Disciple's Response* in 1992 that has created the impetus for widespread adoption of stewardship principles in the pastoral life of many parishes in the USA, Canada.

Stewardship, as a way of life, has been embraced by parishes and dioceses for many years in the United States and Canada: it is now growing in the United Kingdom and Australia. Since Mr Jim Kelley spoke on Stewardship at the Inaugural Australian Catholic Administration Conference in October 2004 the momentum has intensified in dioceses and parishes across Australia and increasingly, Australian parishes are inculcating stewardship principles and practices into their way of life.

In the past few years, leaders from several Australian dioceses have attended stewardship conferences in America. Wollongong diocese hosted the first Australian National Stewardship Institutes in Sydney in 2006. Brisbane and Wollongong dioceses sponsored Stewardship Institutes in Brisbane and Sydney in 2007.

The Australian and New Zealand Stewardship Network has been established to support dioceses and parishes in Australia and New Zealand in living the stewardship way of life. Currently, representatives from Adelaide, Brisbane, Broken Bay, Cairns, Maitland/Newcastle, Perth, Rockhampton, Townsville, Wellington and Wollongong dioceses are participating. Information can be found on the Network website at <http://australianstewardship.catholic.net.au>

Upcoming National Stewardship Events for 2011

In 2011 the Australia and New Zealand Stewardship Network will conduct the following four major events with **Ed and April Laughlin** as principal speakers. Ed and April Laughlin are from Florida, USA. They have 25 years of stewardship experience and have been highly valued speakers at 500 parishes across 60 Catholic dioceses. Ed and April were honoured in 2010 with the Christian Stewardship Award from the International Catholic Stewardship Council.

Sat/Sun 27 & 28 August

STEWARDSHIP INSTITUTE in WELLINGTON, NZ
Hosted by the Catholic Archdiocese of Wellington

Fri/Sat 2 & 3 September -

STEWARDSHIP INSTITUTE in ROCKHAMPTON, Qld
Hosted by the Catholic Diocese of Rockhampton

Fri/Sat 9 & 10 September

CONFERENCE on Stewardship at Riverglenn, Indooroopilly, BRISBANE
Hosted by the Catholic Archdiocese of Brisbane

Sat/Sun 17 & 18 September

STEWARDSHIP INSTITUTE at ACU Campus in BALLARAT, Vic
Hosted by the Catholic Diocese of Ballarat & Australian Catholic University

The three Institutes provide a comprehensive introduction to stewardship. The Conference will offer input and workshops for those who are already embracing a stewardship way of life. For further information contact:

Mr. Chris Ehler

Stewardship Support Committee Co-ordinator – Archdiocese of Brisbane
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FORMAT OF PRAYER SEGMENTS

(20 MINS)

1. OPENING PRAYERS

- ❖ Opening Prayers from the Order Prayers for Meetings of the Order.

2. PRAYER FOCUS

- ❖ Each segment will address a theme taken from the Order Prayers and the Objects of the Order.

3. THE WORD

- ❖ The Word of God and related reading from Church documentation is proclaimed. This is read by the discussion leader or member/s nominated by him.

4. REFLECTION

- ❖ Silent reflection on the Word of God and other readings. (5 mins.)

5. THE SHARING

- ❖ Members share their reflection on the Word and responses to discussion points. (10 mins.)

6. CLOSING PRAYERS

- ❖ Closing Prayer as in the Order Prayers for Meetings of the Order.

Points for Successful Formation Programmes

1. Choose a formation leader for the year so that someone is responsible for the facilitation of the segment.
2. These formation segments require each participant to ideally have his own copy of the Readings, therefore a copy of the Session should be provided for each member at the each meeting.
3. Abide strictly to the allotted time; not less than twenty nor more than thirty minutes.

SESSION NO 1

THEME: *AN INTRODUCTION TO STEWARDSHIP*

"As each one has received a gift, use it to serve one another as good stewards of God's varied grace." (Peter 4:10)

CALL TO PRAYER & OPENING PRAYER: As for the Order Prayers

FOCUS: *What is Christian Stewardship and on what is it based?*

WORDS OF REFLECTION

The following words should be read aloud by several readers.

The word "stewardship" refers to the Christian and Catholic approach to the gifts that God has bestowed upon us.

Stewardship is living out a commitment to be Christ-centered rather than self-centered. Profound gratitude, justice and love become the fundamental motives for giving back to God. Everything that God has given to us is intended to serve the divine plan. Therefore, our life is to be lived in gratitude toward God. In a variety of ways, we as disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ, share our time, talent and treasure to build up the Church and make our world a better place.

Three convictions in particular underlie our understanding of stewardship.

1. Mature disciples make a conscious, firm decision, carried out in action, to be followers of Jesus Christ no matter the cost to themselves.
2. Beginning in conversion, change of mind and heart, this commitment is expressed not in a single action, nor even in a number of actions over a period of time, but in an entire way of life. It means committing one's very self to the Lord.
3. Stewardship is an expression of discipleship, with the power to change how we understand and live out our lives. Disciples who practice stewardship recognize God as the origin of life, the giver of freedom, the source of all they have and are and will be. They are deeply aware of the truth that *"The Lord's are the earth and its fullness; the world and those who dwell in it"* (Psalm 24:1). They know themselves to be recipients and caretakers of God's many gifts. They are grateful for what they have received and eager to cultivate their gifts out of love for God and one another.

The Church needs you and God has chosen you to go out into the entire world. Every Christian is to take an active part in the life of the Church and to share the gifts of salvation. God's generosity will never be outdone by our own.

Note: Further information on Christian stewardship in Australia can be found on page 4 at the beginning of the Formation Programme.

Allow a few moments reflective silence, then proclaim the Word of God

WORD OF GOD



From the First Letter of St. Paul to the Corinthians 4: 1-2

The Word of God is now read aloud slowly and prayerfully

Think of us in this way, as servants of Christ and stewards of God's mysteries. Moreover, it is required of stewards that they be found trustworthy. But with me it is a very small thing that I should be judged by you or by any human court. I do not even judge myself. I am not aware of anything against myself, but I am not thereby acquitted. It is the Lord who judges me. Therefore do not pronounce judgment before the time, before the Lord comes, who will bring to light the things now hidden in darkness and will disclose the purposes of the heart. Then each one will receive commendation from God.

I have applied all this ... so that you may learn through us the meaning of the saying, "Nothing beyond what is written," so that none of you will be puffed up in favour of one against another. For who sees anything different in you? What do you have that you did not receive? And if you received it, why do you boast as if it were not a gift?

Already you have all you want!

The Word of the Lord.



*For the next five minutes silently re-read and reflect on the readings.
Underline what you consider to be key words and/or phrases for you.*

THE SHARING



*Now bring your insights and reflection around the theme into discussion of the following:
(10 mins)*

- ❖ What does the Word of God say to you regarding discipleship and stewardship?
- ❖ Would you add or subtract anything to the three basic convictions that underlie the notion of Christian Stewardship?
- ❖ What is one new insight you take away with you from this time of reflection and prayer?

CONCLUSION

Leader: As we conclude this time of reflection, let us give praise to God as we say:

All: Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit;
as it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be,
world without end. Amen.

The meeting proceeds

CLOSING PRAYERS: As for the Order Prayers at the Closing of the Meeting.

SEGMENT NO 2

THEME: *THE CALL TO DISCIPLESHIP*

“Prompted by the Holy Spirit, the Church must walk the same road which Christ walked, and the Church means all of us, joined together like a body receiving its life-giving influence from the Lord Jesus.”

Pope John Paul II “Ecclesia in Oceania” #10

CALL TO PRAYER & OPENING PRAYER: As for the Order Prayers

FOCUS: *The call and response of the Disciple*

WORDS FOR REFLECTION

1. What is a disciple? Jesus said, “*Follow Me*” (Matthew 4:19; 9:9). Jesus did not mean that they should just physically follow Him on the road, as we really can’t do that now. Rather, this is a call to be set apart, challenged, and taught so we see and adhere to the call and mission Christ gives us. The word “disciple” literally means someone who pledges to be a “learner.” Moreover, it is someone who follows another’s teaching, and adheres to it. It is a commitment and a process to undertake the learning, and, as a Christian, a yearning to imitate Jesus!

2. Becoming a disciple of Jesus Christ leads naturally to the practice of stewardship. These linked realities, discipleship and stewardship, then make up the fabric of a Christian life in which each day is lived in an intimate, personal relationship with the Lord.

This Christ-centered way of living has its beginning in Baptism, the sacrament of faith. As Vatican II remarks, all Christians are “bound to show forth, by the example of their lives and by the witness of their speech,” that new life of faith which begins in Baptism and is strengthened by the power of the Holy Spirit in Confirmation. (Ad Gentes, no. 11) Faith joins individuals and the community of Jesus’ followers in intimacy with their Lord and leads them to live as his disciples. Union with Christ gives rise to a sense of solidarity and common cause between the disciples and the Lord and also among the disciples themselves.

Following Jesus is the work of a lifetime. At every step forward, one is challenged to go further in accepting and loving God’s will. Being a disciple is not just something else to do, alongside many other things suitable for Christians; it is a total way of life and requires continuing conversion. (SADR pg 27)

Allow a brief time for quiet reflection on the above words then the Word of God is read.

WORD OF GOD



From the Gospel of John & the Gospel of Matthew

The Word of God is now read aloud slowly and prayerfully

The First Disciples


The next day John again was standing with two of his disciples, and as he watched Jesus walk by, he exclaimed, “Look, here is the Lamb of God!” The two disciples heard him say this, and

they followed Jesus. When Jesus turned and saw them following, he said to them, “What are you looking for?” They said to him, “Rabbi” (which translated means Teacher), “where are you staying?” He said to them, “Come and see.” They came and saw where he was staying, and they remained with him that day. It was about four o’clock in the afternoon. One of the two who heard John speak and followed him was Andrew, Simon Peter’s brother. He first found his brother Simon and said to him, “We have found the Messiah” (which is translated Anointed). He brought Simon to Jesus, who looked at him and said, “You are Simon son of John. You are to be called Cephas” (which is translated Peter). (John 1:35 – 42)

Brief silence between Readings

Jesus Calls the First Disciples

As he walked by the Sea of Galilee, he saw two brothers, Simon, who is called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea—for they were fishermen. And he said to them, “Follow me, and I will make you fish for people.” Immediately they left their nets and followed him. As he went from there, he saw two other brothers, James son of Zebedee and his brother John, in the boat with their father Zebedee, mending their nets, and he called them. Immediately they left the boat and their father, and followed him. (Matthew 4:18 – 22)

 *For the next five minutes silently reflect on all the texts, selecting and underlining significant points.*

THE SHARING -*Now bring your insights and reflection into discussion of the following: (10 mins)*

- ❖ What is your definition of a disciple?
- ❖ Where have you seen true discipleship at work?
- ❖ How can/do you embrace what discipleship means and apply it to your life?

CONCLUSION

Leader: As we conclude this time of reflection, let us give praise to God as we say:

All: Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit;
as it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be,
world without end. Amen.

The meeting proceeds

CLOSING PRAYERS: As for the Order Prayers at the Closing of the Meeting.

SEGMENT NO 3

THEME: *THE CALL TO STEWARDSHIP*

“It is better to give than to receive.” Acts 20:35

CALL TO PRAYER & OPENING PRAYER: As for the Order Prayers

FOCUS: *Understanding the nature of the call to Stewardship and the cost.*

WORD OF REFLECTION

1. In the Preface to the Oceania Edition of “Stewardship - A Disciple’s Response: A Pastoral Letter on Stewardship” (USCCB) Bishop Peter Ingham, Bishop of Wollongong writes:

“I am convinced that stewardship is a spiritual and pastoral approach to many of the secularising issues that we face as Catholic Christians today. Stewardship embraces all that is held central and essential to our faith and to living as a Catholic Christian. We are all beginning to realise that the face of our planet and the future of people on this earth will be determined ultimately by the quality of how we are stewards of God’s gifts. You and I are called to be stewards of the sacredness of human life from conception to natural death, as well as stewards of the integrity of our created world and stewards of inclusion and harmony among peoples of all races, cultures and faith traditions, because every human being is made in the image and likeness of God.

A good steward is responsible, accountable and grateful for the blessings received from God (even adversity, though not always initially recognised as a ‘blessing’) so that we may then share the gifts received generously, out of a sense of love and justice, knowing *“it is better to give than to receive”* (Acts 20:35). A good steward knows that we give because we want to return to God some of what God has given to us. I endorse being a steward as it is a response to following Jesus as his faithful disciple. It is really emphasising that God is in charge, not me.”

Brief silence between Readings

2. Stewards of the Earth

A steward is someone who handles affairs for someone else. In ancient kingdoms, stewards ran the country in the absence of the king. Upon the king's return, the steward gave a full accounting for his actions.

This concept of stewardship dates from the beginning of time, when God entrusted the earth to Adam and Eve and their offspring. We are all stewards of the earth's resources (cf. Catechism, no. 2402). In a new way, all Christians are stewards of the earth and of the spiritual graces given through Christ's death and Resurrection. We have received not only the earth, but also many spiritual riches to be used to advance the kingdom of God (cf. Lk. 19:11-27). The stewardship expected of Adam and Eve and all of us has three essential characteristics. It is collective; it respects the purpose for which things exist; and it respects the dignity of each person.

God did not expect only one person to be the steward of all creation. This essential truth is embodied in the right to life. Each person born contributes to the well-being of society. Through prayer, work, and discovery, each person allows others to grow in knowledge and holiness. Thus, no one person rules the earth. Collectively, we are stewards of the earth.

Understanding that stewardship is collective requires us to find ways in which we can collaborate with others to make the resources in our possession work for the good of all as intended by God. As explained in Catechism, no. 2402:

In the beginning God entrusted the earth and its resources to the common stewardship of mankind to take care of them, master them by labour, and enjoy their fruits. The goods of creation are destined for the whole human race.

Taken from: Philip C.L. Gray. "Christian Stewardship: What God Expects from Us." *Lay Witness* (September 2001).

Allow a few moments reflective silence and then proclaim the Word of God

WORD OF GOD



The Gospel according to Matthew 25: 14-25

The Word of God is now read aloud slowly and prayerfully

“For it is as if a man, going on a journey, summoned his slaves and entrusted his property to them; to one he gave five talents, to another two, to another one, to each according to his ability. Then he went away. The one who had received the five talents went off at once and traded with them, and made five more talents. In the same way, the one who had the two talents made two more talents. But the one who had received the one talent went off and dug a hole in the ground and hid his master’s money. After a long time the master of those slaves came and settled accounts with them. Then the one who had received the five talents came forward, bringing five more talents, saying, ‘Master, you handed over to me five talents; see, I have made five more talents.’ His master said to him, ‘Well done, good and trustworthy slave; you have been trustworthy in a few things, I will put you in charge of many things; enter into the joy of your master.’ And the one with the two talents also came forward, saying, ‘Master, you handed over to me two talents; see, I have made two more talents.’ His master said to him, ‘Well done, good and trustworthy slave; you have been trustworthy in a few things, I will put you in charge of many things; enter into the joy of your master.’”



For the next five minutes silently read and reflect on the readings.

Underline what you consider to be key words and/or phrases for you.

THE SHARING



Now bring your insights and reflection into discussion of the following: (10 mins)

- ❖ If you were to be an ideal Christian steward – with the help of God’s grace of course – what would it ask of you?
- ❖ If you were to be a faithful steward, would you have to do it alone or can you count on support from other sources? Which ones?

CONCLUSION

Leader: As we conclude this time of reflection, let us give praise to God as we say:

All: Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit;
as it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be,
world without end. Amen.

The meeting proceeds

CLOSING PRAYERS: As for the Order Prayers at the Closing of the Meeting.

SEGMENT NO 4

THEME: *THE WAY OF JESUS*

“My food is to do the will of the one who sent me and to finish his work.”

John 4:34

CALL TO PRAYER & OPENING PRAYER: As for the Order Prayers

FOCUS: *The example of the Steward as found in Jesus*

WORDS OF REFLECTION - *Reflect on the reading of the following:*

1. The Christian vocation is essentially a call to be a disciple of Jesus. Stewardship is part of that. Even more to the point, however, Christians are called to be good stewards of the personal vocations they receive. Each of us must discern, accept, and live out joyfully and generously the commitments, responsibilities, and roles to which God calls him or her.

(SADR p. 25)

2. Jesus is the supreme teacher of Christian stewardship, as he is of every other aspect of Christian life; and in Jesus' teaching and life self-emptying is fundamental. Now, it might seem that self-emptying has little to do with stewardship, but in Jesus' case that is not so. His self-emptying is not sterile self-denial for its own sake; rather, in setting aside self, he is filled with the Father's will, and he is fulfilled in just this way: *“My food is to do the will of the one who sent me and to finish his work”* (Jn 4:34).

Jesus' mission is to restore to good order the created household of God which sin has disrupted. He not only perfectly accomplishes this task, but also, in calling disciples, empowers them to collaborate with him in the work of redemption for themselves and on behalf of others.

Jesus sometimes describes a disciple's life in terms of stewardship (*cf. Mt 25:14-30; Lk 12:42-48*), not because being a steward is the whole of it but because this role sheds a certain light on it. An *‘oikonomos’* or steward is one to whom the owner of a household turns over responsibility for caring for the property, managing affairs, making resources yield as much as possible, and sharing the resources with others. The position involves trust and accountability. (SADR p. 33)

3. Being-with-Jesus refers to a manner of thinking, of acting, of loving, of relating to others, of viewing the world. It is a way of talking about our willingness to follow Jesus, to be drawn by his example, to learn from him, and to have our loyalties corrected and shaped by his. (*William Reiser*)

Allow a few moments reflective silence, then proclaim the Word of God

WORD OF GOD



From the Gospel of Luke 12: 41-48

Peter said, “Lord, are you telling this parable for us or for everyone?” And the Lord said, “Who then is the faithful and prudent manager whom his master will put in charge of his slaves, to give them their allowance of food at the proper time? Blessed is that slave whom his master will find at work when he arrives. Truly I tell you, he will put that one in charge of all his possessions.

But if that slave says to himself, ‘My master is delayed in coming,’ and if he begins to beat the other slaves, men and women, and to eat and drink and get drunk, the master of that slave will come on a day when he does not expect him and at an hour that he does not know, and will cut him in pieces, and put him with the unfaithful. That slave who knew what his master wanted, but did not prepare himself or do what was wanted, will receive a severe beating. But the one who did not know and did what deserved a beating will receive a light beating.

From everyone to whom much has been given, much will be required; and from the one to whom much has been entrusted, even more will be demanded.



***For the next five minutes silently read and reflect on the readings.
Underline what you consider to be key words and/or phrases for you.***

THE SHARING



Now bring your insights and reflection around the theme and the Readings into discussion of the following: (10 mins)

- ❖ What are the qualities in the life of Jesus that provide for us a standard by which to live?
- ❖ If you were speaking to other members of KSC or members of a parish about stewardship, what example would you use from the life of Jesus?
- ❖ What should you do best in God’s Kingdom on earth to prepare yourself for God’s Kingdom in heaven?

CONCLUSION

Leader: As we conclude this time of reflection, let us give praise to God as we say:

All: Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit;
as it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be,
world without end. Amen.

The meeting proceeds

CLOSING PRAYERS: As for the Order Prayers at the Closing of the Meeting.

SEGMENT NO 5

THEME: *LIVING AS A STEWARD*

“It was not you who chose me, but I who chose you and appointed you to go and bear fruit that will remain.” John 15:16

CALL TO PRAYER & OPENING PRAYER: As for the Order Prayers

FOCUS: *How we can collaborate with God's creation*

WORDS OF REFLECTION - *Reflect on the reading of the following:*

1. “I have learned to share because I want to, not because I need to. There are no controls, no strings attached, and no guarantee when we give unconditionally. That doesn't mean that in retrospect I haven't questioned my decisions; it simply means that I've tried to look at it as a growth experience, always keeping in mind the life of Jesus Christ. I personally see stewardship as a nurturing process. It is, in a sense, an invitation to reassess our priorities. It is ongoing and often painful, but most of all it brings a personal sense of happiness and peace of mind as I continue my journey through life.”

Jim Hogan - Green Bay, Wisconsin

2. Creation and stewardship

Although it would be a mistake to think that stewardship by itself includes the whole of Christian life, in probing the Christian meaning of stewardship one confronts an astonishing fact: God wishes human beings to be his collaborators in the work of creation, redemption, and sanctification; and such collaboration involves stewardship in its most profound sense. We exercise such stewardship, furthermore, not merely by our own power but by the power of the Spirit of truth, whom Jesus promises to his followers (cf. Jn 14:16-17), and whom we see at work at the first Pentecost inspiring the apostles to commence that proclamation of the good news which has continued to this day (cf. Acts 2:1-4). (SADR p39)

3. Collaborators in Creation

Everyone has some natural responsibility for a portion of the world and an obligation in caring for it to acknowledge God's dominion. But there are also those who might be called stewards by grace. Baptism makes Christians stewards of this kind, able to act explicitly on God's behalf in cultivating and serving the portion of the world entrusted to their care.

We find the perfect model of such stewardship in the Lord. Although Jesus is the unique priest and mediator, his disciples share in his priestly work. Baptism makes them “a royal priesthood” (1 Pt 2:9) called to offer up the world and all that is in it—especially themselves—to the Lord of all. In exercising this office, they most fully realize the meaning of our Christian stewardship.

While it is lived out by individual women and men in countless ways corresponding to their personal vocations, human cooperation with God's work of creation in general takes several forms. One of these is a profound reverence for the great gift of life, their own lives and the lives of others, along with readiness to spend themselves in serving all that preserves and enhances life. Partly too, stewardship of the world is expressed by

jubilant appreciation of nature, whose God-given beauty not even exploitation and abuse have destroyed. Beyond simply appreciating natural beauty, there is the active stewardship of ecological concern. Ecological stewardship means cultivating a heightened sense of human interdependence and solidarity. (SADR p42)

Allow a few moments reflective silence.

WORD OF GOD *Read the following text aloud slowly and prayerfully*



From the first Letter of Peter 2:9

But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's own people, in order that you may proclaim the mighty acts of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light. Once you were not a people, but now you are God's people; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.



From the Gospel of Matthew 5: 13-16

“You are the salt of the earth; but if salt has lost its taste, how can its saltiness be restored? It is no longer good for anything, but is thrown out and trampled under foot. “You are the light of the world. A city built on a hill cannot be hid. No one after lighting a lamp puts it under the bushel basket, but on the lampstand, and it gives light to all in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven.



*For the next five minutes silently read and reflect on the readings.
Underline what you consider to be key words and/or phrases for you.*

THE SHARING



Now bring your insights and reflections into discussion of the following: (10 mins)

- ❖ In your lifetime, how have you experienced co-creation with God?
- ❖ What problems & pain can you see associated with Christian stewardship?
- ❖ How do you relate Christian stewardship to ecology, to your personal care for the environment?

CONCLUSION

Leader: As we conclude this time of reflection, let us give praise to God as we say:

All: Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit;
as it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be,
world without end. Amen.

The meeting proceeds

CLOSING PRAYERS: As for the Order Prayers at the Closing of the Meeting.

SEGMENT NO 6

THEME: *STEWARDS OF THE CHURCH*

“To each individual the manifestation of the Spirit is given for some benefit.”

1 Cor 12:7

CALL TO PRAYER & OPENING PRAYER: As for the Order Prayers

FOCUS: *Understanding the call of the Church to Stewardship*

WORD OF REFLECTION

Reflect on the reading of the following words:

1. Community & Stewardship

Because its individual members do collectively make up the Body of Christ, that body's health and well-being are the responsibility of the members—the personal responsibility of each one of us. Stewardship in an ecclesial setting means cherishing and fostering the gifts of all, while using one's own gifts to serve the community of faith. (cf 1 Cor 12:7) The rich tradition of tithing set forth in the Old Testament is an expression of this. (See, for example, Dt 14:22; Lv 27:30.) Those who set their hearts upon spiritual gifts must “seek to have an abundance for building up the church” (1 Cor 14:12).

But how is the Church built up? In a sense there are as many answers to that question as there are individual members with individual vocations. But the overarching answer for all is this: through personal participation in and support of the Church's mission of proclaiming and teaching, serving and sanctifying.

This participation takes different forms according to people's different gifts and offices, but there is a fundamental obligation arising from the sacrament of Baptism that people place their gifts, their resources, their selves at God's service in and through the Church. (SADR p47)

2. Evangelisation & Stewardship

In various ways, then, stewardship of the Church leads people to share in the work of evangelization or proclaiming the Good News, in the work of catechesis or transmitting and strengthening the faith, and in works of justice and mercy on behalf of persons in need. Stewardship requires support for the Church's institutions and programs for these purposes. But, according to their opportunities and circumstances, members of the Church also should engage in such activities personally and on their own initiative.

Parents, for instance, have work of great importance to do in the domestic church, the home. It requires that parents themselves be models of stewardship, especially by their selfless service to one another, to their children, and to church and community needs.

Parishes, too, must be, or become, true communities of faith within which this Christian way of life is learned and practiced. Sound business practice is a fundamental of good stewardship, and stewardship as it relates to church finances must include the most stringent ethical, legal, and fiscal standards. That requires several things: pastors and parish staff must be open, consultative, collegial, and accountable in the conduct of affairs. And parishioners must accept responsibility for their parishes and contribute generously. (SADR p48)

Allow a few moments reflective silence, then proclaim the Word of God

WORD OF GOD

Read the following texts aloud slowly and prayerfully



The Word according to the first Letter of Peter 4: 8-10

Above all, maintain constant love for one another, for love covers a multitude of sins. Be hospitable to one another without complaining. Like good stewards of the manifold grace of God, serve one another with whatever gift each of you has received.



The Gospel according to Luke 15:12

“A man may be wealthy but his possessions do not guarantee him life.”



The Gospel according to Mark 10: 43-45

But it is not so among you; but whoever wishes to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wishes to be first among you must be slave of all. For the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life a ransom for many.”



***For the next five minutes silently read and reflect on all the readings.
Underline what you consider to be key words and/or phrases for you.***

THE SHARING



Now bring your insights and reflection around the theme and the Readings into discussion of the following: (10 mins)

- ❖ Have you had the experience of being ‘served and healed’ when you have set out to serve and heal another?
- ❖ Within the institutional Church, of which you are a member, what do you see as important stewardship priorities?
- ❖ Is there more to stewardship within the Church than donations of time and money?

CONCLUSION

Leader: As we conclude this time of reflection, let us give praise to God as we say:

All: Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit;
as it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be,
world without end. Amen.

The meeting proceeds

CLOSING PRAYERS: As for the Order Prayers at the Closing of the Meeting.

SEGMENT NO 7

THEME: *THE CHRISTIAN STEWARD*

CALL TO PRAYER & OPENING PRAYER: As for the Order Prayers

FOCUS: *"Taking on the nature of a Christian Steward"*

WORDS OF REFLECTION (*Read aloud by several readers*)

1. A Life Experience

"It was sixteen years ago, but it seems like only yesterday. I was suddenly confronted with serious surgery, which I never thought would happen to me. It always happened to others. The memory is still there, and I recall vividly the days before the surgery. I really received the grace to ask myself, "What do I own, and what owns me?" When you are wheeled into a surgery room, it really doesn't matter who you are or what you possess. What counts is the confidence in a competent surgical staff and a good and gracious God. I know that my whole understanding and appreciation of the gifts and resources I possess took on new meaning. It is amazing how a divine economy of life and health provides a unique perspective of what really matters."

Most Reverend Thomas J. Murphy - Archbishop of Seattle

2. A New Way of 'Seeing'

In the lives of disciples, however, something else must come before the practice of stewardship. They need a flash of insight—a certain way of *seeing*—by which they view the world and their relationship to it in a fresh, new light. "The world is charged with the grandeur of God," Gerard Manley Hopkins exclaims; more than anything else, it may be this glimpse of the divine grandeur in all that is that sets people on the path of Christian stewardship. (SADR p55)

From the outset of his covenanting, God had it in mind to make many one. He promised Abram: "I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you . . . all the communities of the earth shall find blessing in you" (Gn 12:23). In Jesus, the Kingdom of God is inaugurated—a kingdom open to all. Those who enter into Jesus' New Covenant find themselves growing in a union of minds and hearts with others who also have responded to God's call. They find their hearts and minds expanding to embrace all men and women, especially those in need, in a communion of mercy and love. (SADR p51)

3. Eucharistic Stewardship

The Eucharist is the great sign and agent of this expansive communion of charity. "Because the loaf of bread is one, we, though many, are one body, for we all partake of the one loaf" (1 Cor. 10:17). Here people enjoy a unique union with Christ and, in him, with one another. Here his love—indeed, his very self—flows into his disciples and, through them and their practice of stewardship, to the entire human race.

In the Eucharist, Christians reaffirm their participation in the New Covenant; they give thanks to God for blessings received; and they strengthen their bonds of commitment to one another as members of the covenant community Jesus forms. And what do Christians bring to the Eucharistic celebration and join there with Jesus' offering? Their lives as Christian disciples; their personal vocations and the stewardship they have exercised regarding them; their individual contributions to the great work of restoring all things in Christ. The glory and the boast of Christian stewards lie in mirroring, however poorly, the stewardship of Jesus Christ, who gave and still gives all he has and is, in order to be faithful to God's will and carry through to completion his redemptive stewardship of human beings and their world. (SADR p52)

Allow a few moments reflective silence, then proclaim the Word of God

**The Gospel according to Luke 22: 19-20**

Then he took a loaf of bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to them, saying, "This is my body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me." And he did the same with the cup after supper, saying, "This cup that is poured out for you is the new covenant in my blood."

**The Gospel according to Matthew 5: 1-12**

When Jesus saw the crowds, he went up the mountain; and after he sat down, his disciples came to him. Then he began to speak, and taught them, saying:
 "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
 "Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.
 "Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth.
 "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.
 "Blessed are the merciful, for they will receive mercy.
 "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.
 "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.
 "Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
 "Blessed are you when people revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.



For the next five minutes silently read and reflect on all the readings.

THE SHARING

Now bring your insights and reflection into discussion of the following: (10 mins)

- ❖ What are the characteristics of Christian and Eucharistic stewardship which emerge from these readings and scripture? Make a combined list of the three seen as most important.
- ❖ How would you go about connecting embodying these characteristics as an individual and as Knights of the Southern Cross?

CONCLUSION

Leader: As we conclude this time of reflection, let us give praise to God as we say:

All: Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit;
 as it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be,
 world without end. Amen.

The meeting proceeds

CLOSING PRAYERS: As for the Order Prayers at the Closing of the Meeting.

SEGMENT NO 8

THEME: *TO BE A CHRISTIAN STEWARD*

"As each one has received a gift, use it to serve one another as good stewards of God's varied grace." (Peter 4:10)

CALL TO PRAYER & OPENING PRAYER: As for the Order Prayers

FOCUS: *Consideration of the ways and means to move forward*

WORD OF INTRODUCTION *Read silently*

'Who is a Christian steward?

One who receives God's gifts gratefully, cherishes and tends them in a responsible and accountable manner, shares them in justice and love with all, and returns them with increase to the Lord.'

WORD OF REFLECTION *Read aloud by several readers*

1. This comprehensive definition above of Christian stewardship headlines the pastoral letter *Stewardship: A Disciple's Response*, which has been the basis of this reflection on Stewardship during 2011. The definition, rooted in biblical and church tradition, corresponds with Almighty God's decision to entrust to humanity the universe God had created (Gn 1:26-31) and with Jesus Christ's famous parable of the talents (Mt 25:14-36). For disciples of Christ - everyone who responds to Jesus' invitation, "Come, follow me" - Christian stewardship is an obligation, not an option. Correctly and fully understood, Christian stewardship holds every individual accountable to God for personal care of the universe. At the time of judgment, God will have the right to ask: What did you do with *my* world?" Christian stewardship, therefore, applies to everything - all personal talents, abilities, and wealth; the local, national, and worldwide environment; all human and natural resources wherever they are; the economic order; governmental affairs; and even outer space. This stewardship does not tolerate indifference to anything important in God's world. The pastoral letter describes stewardship as a way of life. It challenges Christians, inspired and guided by the Holy Spirit, to try to see the hand of God in all creation. That calls for time - quality time - and extended perseverance. Stewardship is not easy. (SADR p67)

2. What identifies a steward? Safeguarding material and human resources and using them responsibly are one answer; so is generous giving of time, talent, and treasure. But being a Christian steward means more. As Christian stewards, we receive God's gifts gratefully, cultivate them responsibly, share them lovingly in justice with others, and return them with increase to the Lord. (SADR p59)

3. We must ask ourselves: Do we also wish to be disciples of Jesus Christ and Christian stewards of our world and our Church? Central to our human and Christian vocations, as well as to the unique vocation each one of us receives from God, is that we be good stewards of the gifts we possess. God gives us this divine-human workshop, this world and Church of ours. The Spirit shows us the way. Stewardship is a part of that journey. (SADR p62)

Allow a few moments reflective silence and then proclaim the Word of God

WORD OF GOD



The Gospel according to Matthew 28: 16-20

The Word of God is now read aloud slowly and prayerfully

Now the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had directed them. When they saw him, they worshiped him; but some doubted. And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age."



The Word according to the First Letter to Timothy 6: 11-19

For we brought nothing into the world, so that we can take nothing out of it; but if we have food and clothing, we will be content with these. But as for you, man of God, pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, endurance, gentleness. Fight the good fight of the faith; take hold of the eternal life, to which you were called and for which you made the good confession in the presence of many witnesses.

As for those who in the present age are rich, command them not to be haughty, or to set their hopes on the uncertainty of riches, but rather on God who richly provides us with everything for our enjoyment. They are to do good, to be rich in good works, generous, and ready to share, thus storing up for themselves the treasure of a good foundation for the future, so that they may take hold of the life that really is life.



For the next five minutes silently read and reflect on the readings.

Underline what you consider to be key words and/or phrases for you.

THE SHARING



Now bring your insights and reflection into discussion of the following: (10 mins)

- ❖ What is the key understanding of Christian Stewardship that you have gained from the 2011 Formation Programme?
- ❖ What are the blessings of Christian Stewardship?
- ❖ What can the Knights of the Southern Cross do to build up the Australian Church through the work of Christian Stewardship?

CONCLUSION

Leader: As we conclude this time of reflection, let us give praise to God as we say:

All: **Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit;
as it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be,
world without end. Amen.**

The meeting proceeds

CLOSING PRAYERS: As for the Order Prayers at the Closing of the Meeting.