

We are called to . . .

Powerful work

Jesus' three questions to Peter about love are followed by three commands: feed my lambs, feed my sheep. Let us never forget that authentic power is service.

— Pope Francis, March 19, 2013

We are a people who crave power. Without realizing it, we covet the power to consume, the power to impress, and the power to fulfill our every need and want. Yet, Pope Francis reminds us that true power lies not in taking care of our own wants, but rather in taking care of the needs of others. Jesus taught us this through the witness of his own life, and he challenges us to follow his example. “Truly, truly, I say to you, he who believes in me will also do the works that I do” (Jn 14:12). We know what work Jesus did: He fed the hungry, he cared for the sick, he befriended the stranger and the outcast, and he loved the children. This is the work of serving and protecting. This is the work we are called to do. This is the most powerful work.

SHUTTERSTOCK



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We are called to . . .

Give hope

To protect creation, to protect every man and every woman, to look upon them with tenderness and love, is to open up a horizon of hope; it is to let a shaft of light break through the heavy clouds; it is to bring the warmth of hope!

— Pope Francis, March 19, 2013

The most beloved prayer in the world is the Our Father. We repeat it often, asking God, “Give us this day our daily bread.” Whether we realize it or not, the words Jesus taught us are not selfish words. We do not ask for “my” daily bread. We ask for “our” daily bread. We ask for the whole world. We can enter into a new age of hope for our world when we embrace the challenge to be good stewards, to be protectors, and to share what we have. Pope Francis calls us to a stewardship of hope. He calls us to care more deeply, to give more generously, and to love more tenderly. We have within us the power to make a difference in our parish, our communities, indeed our world, when we heed the call of good stewardship.

“Let us protect with love all that God has given us!”

— Pope Francis, March 19, 2013

Additional Resources

Books

Pope Francis, Matthew E. Bunson, D.Min. (Our Sunday Visitor, 2013).

The Environment, Pope Benedict XVI. (Our Sunday Visitor, 2012).

Surrender! The Life Changing Power of Doing God's Will, Fr. Larry Richards. (Our Sunday Visitor, 2012)

Doers of the Word, Cardinal Timothy M. Dolan. (Our Sunday Visitor, 2009)

7 Steps to Be Financially Free, Phil Lenahan. (Our Sunday Visitor, 2006)

Making Stewardship a Way of Life: A Complete Guide for Catholic Parishes, Andrew Kemberling and Mila Glodava. (Our Sunday Visitor, 2009).

Websites

International Catholic Stewardship Council,
www.catholicstewardship.org

Our Sunday Visitor, www.osv.com

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STEFANO SPAZIANI

POPE FRANCIS
A New Call to STEWARDSHIP



“Let us protect Christ in our lives, so that we can protect others, so that we can protect creation!”

— Pope Francis

Opening words from his Installation Homily
March 19, 2013

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We are called . . .

In the end, everything has been entrusted to our protection, and all of us are responsible for it. Be protectors of God's gifts!

— Pope Francis, March 19, 2013

Throughout his life, Pope Francis has been an amazing and humble witness to living simply and caring for others. From the beginning of his papacy, he has shown us how to use the gifts God has given us to care for one another and the world. Pope Francis speaks of stewardship with language that is fresh and fitting for the modern world, and yet the call to live out good stewardship is as ancient as the Scriptures themselves. The command that we live as stewards was first given to us in the Book of Genesis, where we are told God made every good thing for us and then entrusted it to us so we would care for it. None of us is exempt from this command, for all of us have been given great gifts from our heavenly Father.



NEWCOM

We are called to . . .

Cultivate a relationship with God

Worshiping the Lord means giving him the place that he must have; worshiping the Lord means stating, believing — not only by our words — that he alone truly guides our lives; worshiping the Lord means that we are convinced before him that he is the only God, the God of our lives, the God of our history.

— Pope Francis, April 14, 2013

Of all we can do on this earth, our highest priority is to develop a strong relationship with God. He is the one who has given us great gifts, and in return we give him thanks and praise. God has a plan for our lives, and he calls us back to him in all that we do and say. Yet, sadly, in a secular society where Angelus bells no longer remind us to turn regularly to God in prayer, we often can go days without saying a single word to our God. If we are to be good stewards and protectors of the gifts God has given, we must begin by spending more time with God so that we are able to discern his will for our lives. Through prayerful listening, we begin to hear God calling us — each in our own way — to use our time, talent, and treasure to help build his kingdom on earth.



SHUTTERSTOCK

PROTECTING CHRIST IN MY LIFE

- ☐ Do I give thanks to God each day?
- ☐ Do I plan quiet time for prayerful conversation with God?
- ☐ Do I come to Jesus at least weekly, if not more frequently, in the Eucharist?
- ☐ Do I recognize God as the source of all the blessings in my life?
- ☐ Do I tell family and friends of God's goodness?
- ☐ Do I humbly ask God to show me his will for this day?

We are called to . . .

Reach out to people in need

It means protecting people, showing loving concern for each and every person, especially children, the elderly, those in need, who are often the last we think about.

— Pope Francis, March 19, 2013

Since the time of Christ, loving our neighbor has been inexorably linked to loving God. “Truly, I say to you, as you did it not to one of the least of these, you did it not to me” (Mt 25:45). As our day-to-day lives become busier and more rushed, it is easy to overlook our neighbors who are struggling or the homeless person on the street who is hungry. Yet, Pope Francis urges all believers to engage the poor among us and treat everyone with human dignity. Jesus teaches us about God's priorities when he tells us how God will judge us on the last day. God will ask if we cared for him when he was hungry, thirsty, a stranger, naked, ill, or in prison (see “The Judgment of the Nations,” Mt 25:31-46).



THINKSTOCK

PROTECTING OTHERS

- ☐ Have I balanced my life so I have time to spend with family — especially my children, my spouse, and my parents?
- ☐ Do I show compassion and tenderness for all of God's children who suffer in any way?
- ☐ Do I notice the poor people in my community? Do I treat them with respect and dignity by looking into their eyes as Jesus did?
- ☐ Am I involved in any ministry work to protect the unborn, the hungry, the homeless, the imprisoned, the sick, the lonely, the suffering, or the elderly?
- ☐ Do I make financial contributions to organizations that offer care and support to those who are in need, both close to home and around the world?

We are called to . . .

Respect and protect all of creation

It means protecting all creation, the beauty of the created world, as the Book of Genesis tells us and as Saint Francis of Assisi showed us. It means respecting each of God's creatures and respecting the environment in which we live.

— Pope Francis, March 19, 2013

Pope Francis calls us back to his namesake, Saint Francis, and his emphasis on celebrating and protecting God's wondrous creation. In our time, we are called to care for the earth through recycling, planting trees and vegetables, helping to keep our neighborhoods and communities clean, and striving to be responsible and thoughtful consumers. Caring for the world around us should not be a chore. Saint Francis reminds us, “Start by doing what is necessary, then what is possible, and suddenly you are doing the impossible.” By doing our part to protect the earth and all that lives upon it, we are living as good stewards to ensure life for generations to come.



SHUTTERSTOCK

PROTECTING CREATION

- ☐ Do I try to limit wasteful spending and live more simply?
- ☐ Am I striving to be content with what I have, rather than always striving for more?
- ☐ Do I take proper care of my body — the unique and special creation that God made just for me?
- ☐ Do I make conscious efforts to recycle and to conserve natural resources in all forms — including food, water, electricity, and gasoline?
- ☐ Do I share my possessions with those people who have less than me?