

Make Giving Part of Your Summer Plan

The month of May means summer is right around the corner after plenty of chilly weather and rain. Flowers are blooming and trees are budding. And Christian stewards are reminding themselves that stewardship continues as we head into the days of vacation, barbecues, summer reading lists, family reunions and trips to the beach.

We need to be especially mindful of our commitment to giving to our parish and our local church, the diocese. The Chronicle of Philanthropy reports that November and December are the biggest months for giving in the United States. But for those lazy days of summer? Not so much.

Just think about the giving impetus during the holiday season. Every school classroom has a charitable project, youth groups take a turn working at the local soup kitchen. Offices sprout “giving trees” and shelters are inundated with food and donations. The Christmas spirit inspires us to share the bounty. Cold weather brings out our desire to make sure others are sheltered from storm.

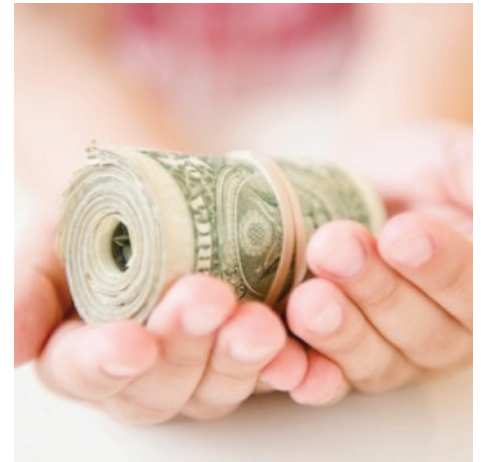
But often, charities tell us that the shelves are not quite so full in the summer, even though people are still hungry. Agencies scramble to fill the roster of helpers who are out on vacation, and sometimes people forget to call and ask how they might fill a need. Even parishes turn to electronic giving programs to make sure that financial donations continue during the summer weeks.

Christian stewards are well aware of summer needs, as well as being aware of their own need to give throughout the year. For the Christian steward, the spirituality of gratitude to God is part of their everyday lives and motivates their generous heart.

On a practical level, this can mean involving your whole family in a summer project at a shelter or soup kitchen. With kids out of school, there’s a great opportunity to fill some idle hours with some eye-opening charitable ventures to a part of town they’ve never seen, or an agency they’ve never visited. The Christian steward can offer to pick up the slack for a day or two when an agency is short on helpers. Remember to make that special monetary gift that equals our holiday giving. We can use spring house-cleaning, not as an excuse to spend a day running a garage sale, but instead as a chance to visit a charity with our surplus and spend the day helping.

We should, of course, not forget our parish when we go away on vacation. Make sure to increase your gifts to make up for those weekend Masses you will not attend at your parish. Also, many diocesan appeals take place in the spring and summer. Giving to the diocesan annual appeal is an excellent way to support the ministries of the local church that no single parish could undertake by itself.

Summer offers a chance to have fun and adventures. Your summer stewardship plan can be as unique and beneficial as the season itself.



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