

## MESSAGE FROM BISHOP THOMAS J. OLMSTED

My Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

A word gaining prominence in Church circles today is Stewardship. Many people use it and many different interpretations seem to exist. Fostering Stewardship in our diocese indicates my strong commitment to the solid principles of Stewardship, principles rooted in the Gospel of Christ.

First and foremost Stewardship is a path to holiness. It makes us more like Christ who came not to be served, but to serve. It is a grateful awareness that all we have and all we are comes freely from God. When we offer our lives back to God in love, He blesses that generosity a hundredfold.

This is so wonderfully shown in the Eucharist, the Sacrament of Christ's own Body and Blood, offered as a saving sacrifice and rich food for us. We then bring this gift into our lives through Holy Communion and we are able to bring, and sent forth to bring, God's gifts of love and life into the world. Our lives as good stewards of God's gifts will not only help in our own time and place, but will leave a legacy for many generations.

As each member of a parish, young and old alike, understands and lives out the life of a good steward, that parish will begin to flourish. We will see families eager to hand on the Faith to others. We will see vocations to the priesthood and religious life. We will see many gifts of God offered with love and sacrifice. We will begin to move away from secularized notions of fundraising and volunteerism to ones rooted in gratitude and love flowing from our worship of God.

We will discover as parishes and as a diocese the unique and irreplaceable mission that God has entrusted to us. We will embrace that mission with love, and freely place our gifts in God's service. This is a step requiring strong faith, a step that is only possible when we seek holiness by carrying our cross in the footsteps of Christ.

Dedicating ourselves to the principles of Stewardship is a sign of our dedication to our Lord and a way of sharing God's holiness and bounty in our parishes, our diocese, and in our country and world. It is a way of handing on to others what God has handed to us. Christ was the perfect image of the Father, and through Stewardship we become more and more like Christ.



+Thomas J. Olmsted  
Bishop of Phoenix