

## **PERSONAL WITNESS**

Since stewardship is a way of life, and not simply a program of church support, the most important ingredient in any effort to encourage giving of time, talent, and treasure is the personal witness of individuals (clergy, religious, and lay) who have experienced a change of heart as a result of their commitment to stewardship. For this reason, parishes and dioceses are strongly encouraged to ground their stewardship and development programs in the personal witness of the bishop, pastor, parish or diocesan staff, and volunteers. An example of this type of personal witness would be for the presider at a liturgy to make a financial contribution or complete a commitment card for time, talent, or resources.

Parish stewardship programs currently in use in parishes and dioceses throughout the United States provide excellent examples of clergy and lay witness talks that can be offered during the liturgies leading up to a stewardship or commitment weekend. To ensure that stewardship is seen as more than simply the parish's annual giving program, witness talks on stewardship themes should also be offered at various times throughout the year. Similarly, diocesan annual giving programs and other diocesan events should include opportunities for personal witness on the part of the bishop and others to the importance of stewardship as a faith response. It is also important that parish leaders present the parish financial report at a different time, preferably a few months prior to the sacrificial giving presentation.