

# What teachings support stewardship in Catholicism?

## Catholic Teachings Supporting the Concept of Stewardship

The concept of stewardship is deeply embedded in Catholic teaching, reflecting the belief that all creation is a gift from God and that He calls individuals to manage these gifts responsibly. Several key teachings and documents from the Church articulate stewardship principles, emphasizing believers' moral and spiritual responsibilities. Here are some foundational teachings that support the concept of stewardship:

### 1. Scriptural Foundations

**Genesis Creation Narrative:** The Book of Genesis presents the foundational understanding of stewardship. In Genesis 1:28, God commands humanity to "be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it." This call to "dominate" the earth is a call to responsible stewardship, where humans are caretakers of creation rather than exploiters.

**Parables of Jesus:** Jesus' parables, such as the Parable of the Talents (Matthew 25:14-30), illustrate the expectation that individuals will use their God-given gifts wisely and productively. The emphasis on accountability in these parables underscores that stewardship entails responsibility and discernment.

### 2. Catechism of the Catholic Church

**Universal Destination of Goods:** The Catechism teaches that "the goods of creation are destined for the whole human race" (CCC 2402). This principle emphasizes that while individuals may own property, they are stewards of these resources, which should benefit all, particularly the poor and marginalized.

**Stewardship of Creation:** The Catechism further states that "in his use of things, man should regard the external goods he legitimately owns not merely as exclusive to himself but common to others also" (CCC 2404). This teaching emphasizes the communal aspect of stewardship, striking a balance between personal ownership and the responsibility to share and care for the common good, thereby stressing the importance of sharing and caring for the common good.

### 3. Papal Teachings

**Pope John Paul II:** In his encyclical *Centesimus Annus*, Pope John Paul II emphasizes the importance of stewardship in the context of economic and social justice. He calls for the responsible use of resources that respect human dignity and promote the common good.

Pope Benedict XVI: In *Caritas in Veritate*, Pope Benedict XVI discusses the ethical implications of economic activity and the need for a stewardship approach that prioritizes the well-being of all people and the environment. He emphasizes integrating economic growth with human development and social responsibility.

Pope Francis: In *Laudato Si*, Pope Francis issues a compelling call for a renewed commitment to environmental stewardship. He urges individuals and communities to care for our common home, emphasizing the interconnectedness of all creations and the moral obligation to protect the environment for future generations.

#### **4. Social Doctrine of the Church**

**Principle of Solidarity:** The Church's social teaching emphasizes solidarity, which calls for a commitment to the common good and the welfare of all, particularly the vulnerable. This principle supports stewardship by highlighting the responsibility to share resources and care for one another.

**Principle of Subsidiarity:** This principle encourages local solutions to social issues. It promotes the idea that individuals and communities should take responsibility for their needs and the stewardship of local resources. It reinforces the importance of active participation in community life and decision-making.

#### **5. Ecological Teachings**

**Care for Creation:** The Church teaches that humans are responsible for caring for the environment as stewards of God's creation. These teachings encompass the responsible management of natural resources and a commitment to sustainability, as outlined in various papal encyclicals and Church documents.

**The interconnectedness of Creation:** The understanding that all creation is interconnected reinforces the idea that stewardship extends beyond individual actions to encompass global responsibility for the environment and social justice, thereby emphasizing that we have global responsibility for the environment and social justice.

The teachings of Catholicism provide a robust framework for understanding and practicing stewardship. From scriptural foundations to the Catechism and papal encyclicals, the Church emphasizes the importance of responsible management of God's gifts, the communal aspect of ownership, and the moral obligation to care for creation and promote the common good; these teachings inspire believers to live out their faith through acts of stewardship, reflecting the love and justice of God in their lives and communities.