



DIOCESE OF LEGAZPI

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SIMBAHAN NIN MGA KATIWALA: NANGANGATAMAN, NAMAMAHALA *Pastoral Letter for 2025 Diocesan Year of Stewardship*

My dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

As we continue our journey towards our Diocesan Diamond Jubilee in 2026, I write to you with joy to announce the upcoming **2025 Year of Stewardship**, which calls us to deepen our commitment as responsible caretakers and stewards, entrusted with God's precious gifts.

The opening of the Year of Stewardship coincides with the beginning of the **Season of Creation**, a time dedicated to caring for our common home. The diocesan launching will take place during the Fiesta Mass in honor of Saint Gregory the Great, our diocesan secondary patron, at The Albay Cathedral on 3 September 2024, at 5:30 p.m. I encourage all parishes to hold their own launching ceremonies in the succeeding days to ensure that every member of our Diocese is made aware and gets involved in this important initiative. This year will be spearheaded by the Diocesan Commission on Temporalities (DCT), guiding us through various aspects of stewardship as we prepare our hearts and minds for the Jubilee.



1. SCRIPTURAL AND THEOLOGICAL FOUNDATION

Our general theme, “*Simbahan nin mga Katiwala: Nangangataman, Namamahala*,” echoes the words of Saint Peter: “As each one has received a gift, use it to serve one another as good stewards of God’s varied grace” (1 Peter 4:10). This verse reminds us that stewardship is not merely a duty but a response to the grace we have received. We are called to be faithful stewards, caring for the gifts God has entrusted to us and using them to serve others.

From the very beginning, the Creator entrusted humanity with the care of creation. In *Genesis 2:15*, we read, “The Lord God then took the man and settled him in the garden of Eden, to cultivate and care for it.” We are called to be caretakers, not just of the environment but of all aspects of our lives, including our financial resources, health, technology, and cultural heritage. Our stewardship is a reflection of our gratitude and respect for the Creator, and it requires us to act with wisdom, compassion, and justice.

As stewards, we are also called to be diligent and responsible, knowing that we will be held accountable for the way we manage the resources and responsibilities entrusted to us. As Jesus says in the *Gospel of Luke*: “Who, then, is the faithful and prudent steward whom the master will put in charge of his servants to distribute the food allowance at the proper time? Blessed is that servant whom his master on arrival finds doing so” (12:42-44).

2. OUR PASTORAL DIRECTION

The Year of Stewardship invites us to focus on three guiding themes: **Conversion** (*Kombersion kan Puso*), **Compassion** (*Hararom na Pagmakulog*), and **Co-Responsibility** (*Pakihiras sa Responsabilidad*). These themes will guide us as we embark on various initiatives throughout the year, reminding us that stewardship is not only about managing resources but also about transforming our hearts, deepening our compassion for all of creation, and sharing responsibility within our communities.

- **Conversion** (*Kombersion kan Puso*): The call to stewardship begins with a conversion of the heart. We are invited to turn away from selfishness and indifference and to embrace a spirit of generosity and responsibility. This conversion is the foundation of true stewardship, as it aligns our hearts with God’s will and opens us to the needs of others.
- **Compassion** (*Hararom na Pagmakulog*): Stewardship is rooted in love and compassion for all of creation. Just as God’s love extends to every corner of the universe, so too must our care and concern reach beyond our immediate needs to encompass the well-being of others, especially the poor, the marginalized, and the earth that has been crying out to us. In *Laudato Si’* and *Laudate Deum*, the Holy Father Pope Francis has been urging us to protect the most vulnerable – whether they are people, creatures of the earth, or ecosystems. Through acts of compassion, we become true stewards of God’s grace by promoting the flourishing of all life.
- **Co-Responsibility** (*Pakihiras sa Responsabilidad*): Stewardship is a shared responsibility that recognizes the interconnectedness of all creation. In line with Pope Francis’ teaching on integral ecology and heeding his call to synodality, we understand that everything is interrelated – our actions impact not only other people but also animals, plants, and the environment. The dominion entrusted to us in the *Book of Genesis* does not permit exploitation; rather, it calls us to responsible management of all God’s gifts. By working together to care for creation, we ensure that the natural world, which sustains all life, is preserved for future generations. Our stewardship must nurture the delicate balance that sustains both humanity and the environment. Therefore, we are all called to embrace our co-responsibility and to participate in the care of creation, the management of resources, and the building of a just and equitable society.

3. FIVE ASPECTS OF STEWARDSHIP

Throughout the Year of Stewardship, we will engage in various initiatives that touch on five key aspects of stewardship: environmental, financial, health, technological, and cultural. These initiatives will help us live out our calling as stewards in practical and meaningful ways.



Environmental Stewardship (September - November 2024) will remind us of our responsibility to care for the Earth. Through prayer, dialogue, and action, we will work to protect our environment, promote sustainability, and mitigate the impacts of climate change.

Financial Stewardship (December 2024 - February 2025) will call us to transparency, accountability, and ethical management of resources. By embracing principles of financial stewardship, we will ensure that our resources are used wisely and justly, in line with Christian values and Church teachings.





Health Stewardship (March - May 2025) will focus on ensuring access to quality healthcare for all, particularly the vulnerable members of our communities. We are reminded that our bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit, and we have a responsibility to care for our health and the health of others.

Technological Stewardship (June - August 2025) will guide us in the responsible use of technology, bridging the digital divide, and ensuring that advancements in technology serve the common good.



Cultural Stewardship (September - November 2025) will help us preserve and celebrate our rich cultural heritage, recognizing that our traditions and history are gifts to be cherished and passed on to future generations.

As we embark on this journey of stewardship, let us remember that we are not alone. We are accompanied by the Holy Spirit, who empowers us to be faithful stewards of God's gifts.

Let us place our efforts under the loving protection of Mary, Our Lady of Salvation. She, who is our patroness and guide, continues to intercede for us, inspiring us to remain faithful stewards of all that has been entrusted to our care.

I encourage you all to embrace this year with a spirit of faith, hope, and love. Let us work together as stewards of God's varied graces, knowing that our efforts, however small, contribute to the building of God's kingdom. And may we all one day hear the words of our Lord, "Well done, my good and faithful servant. Since you were faithful in small matters, I will give you great responsibilities. Come, share your master's joy" (*Matthew 25:21*).

May God bless you and guide you as we journey together in the Year of Stewardship.

In the PEACE that binds us all,



+ JOEL Z. BAYLON, D.D.
Bishop of Legazpi

Please keep on file

23 August 2024

Saint Rose of Lima, virgin, secondary patroness of the Philippines