



ST. PATRICK
Catholic Community
HUDSON, WISCONSIN

Vol. I No.3

February 2009

COMING EVENTS

March 20
Fish Fry

March 28
St. Pat's Gala

April 3
Fish Fry

April 12
Resurrection

April 25
Social Justice Confer-
ence

October 17—20
Parish Mission

STEWARDSHIP

The topic for this month is Stewardship.

Our Pastor, Father John Parr says:

"The foundation of our relationship with God is gratitude. Everything is gift. If the only prayer we ever offer is 'Lord, thank you...', I think that prayer will be more than enough.

Nothing new happens without gratitude. With it, the Lord can make stewards of us all and work wonders in and through us. Deo Gratias. Thanks be to God. "

Question: What is the Catholic view of Christian stewardship? Is it different from the common perception that is raising money for the church?

Answer: This is a great first question because there are misconceptions on this fundamental point. The Catholic view of stewardship is all about the *spirituality* of answering God's call in our life. Jesus calls us to live a life of discipleship. Simply put, it's not about the money! It's about something

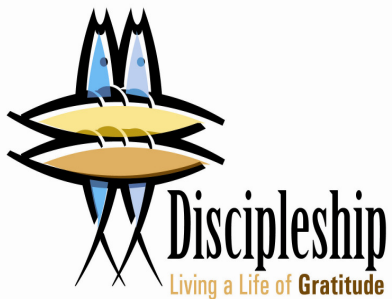
much deeper. We strive to recognize all the many God-given gifts in our lives. We use the shorthand of the "Three T's of Stewardship – Time, Talent and Treasure". These are blessings which come to us from God and we therefore should be grateful. His call to us is to recognize the responsibilities that flow from these gifts, in other words, we are accountable for how we spend our time, our skills and our financial resources. By following the example of Jesus Christ, we are called as His disciples to serve others by sharing our unique gifts. We are called to imitate Christ, who was a humble servant to all. This is why we say Christian stewardship is about our response to God's call – God is inviting us to be His disciples and calling us each in a unique way to share the gifts of time, talent and treasure which have been entrusted to us. What will be our response? The word "steward" means one who is responsible for managing the master's resources. We are called to joyfully return God's gifts to Him, by managing our time, talent and treasure for the benefit of others.

Question: OK, so it's about sharing ourselves with others and it's not just about the money. Where is the spirituality piece in all of this?

Answer: The best place to look would be our St. Patrick Parish Stewardship Prayer. First, we recognize that God is the Creator of all good things and for this we must be grateful. We are called to "live a life of gratitude." If you're not grateful, you're probably not going to be very generous or joyful. Next,

Jesus was the great example of loving service to others, so we ask Him to give us courage to follow as His disciples. Christian stewardship requires sacrificial giving on our part, not just giving in a token sense or from what is “leftover.” Sacrificial giving is hard work and we need courage and fortitude to see us through it. For this, we look to Christ who through His life and death made the ultimate sacrifice for us. We also ask the Holy Spirit to set us on fire with love for one another; this passion can transform us into truly good and generous stewards. We must pray and reflect on these things so we can open our hearts and minds to see what God is calling us to do. Once we understand the call, then we can live out our response. Our motivation should be to live as good stewards for the greater glory of God. So you see, the spirituality of stewardship is pretty well summed up on all on the prayer cards provided to us in our church pews!

Question: What is going on at St. Patrick Parish regarding stewardship?



Answer: Well, perhaps you have noticed that we are starting at the beginning, that is, we are putting a spotlight on “living a life of gratitude.” This is our current focus and a good framework for educating the parish about Christian stewardship generally. Our logo emphasizes this theme with a display of the loaves and fishes, recalling Christ’s example of giving thanks to God the Father for the gift of food and suggesting we imitate Christ’s example by sharing with our brothers and sisters who go without. We’re hoping our logo and the theme: “Stewardship: Living a Life of Gratitude” will be a reminder to all that we

should be appreciative of the many gifts in our lives. Our message continues with a summary of God’s invitation to be good stewards using those “**Three T’s**”: “Worship and Pray with Us” (your **time**), “Minister with Us” (your **talent**) and “Give Generously to Us” (your **treasure**). We want to help all members of our community to hear and head this call.

Question: How are we assisting parishioners to live as good Christian stewards here at St. Patrick church?

Answer: We have a parish program under the guidance of the pastor and directed by the Stewardship Committee. We are emphasizing the spirituality of stewardship in what we call the Four Pillars of Stewardship: (1) **Hospitality**, (2) **Prayer**, (3) **Service** and (4) **Formation**. For **hospitality**, we are working with many other ministers in the parish on becoming a more welcoming place, providing for increased fellowship opportunities, integrating new parishioners, improving how we greet visitors, and just trying to make this a more friendly place. We are called to be ministers of hospitality because we need to welcome everyone as brothers and sisters, whether they are newcomers, visitors, the lonely or the outcast. In short, we are working to develop more of a close and unified community here in the parish. Second, in regards to **prayer**, we are asking everyone to regularly spend time in prayer, public and private, as a way to hear God’s call. We hope the Stewardship Prayer, other petitions and intentions at Mass, and spending time in personal reflection will aid parishioners on their individual journeys. Third, we are making it easier to engage in **service** to the parish. We sponsor an annual Time and Talent campaign each fall, where we outline the ministry opportunities and solicit responses from each household on how each person would like to get involved. We are working hard to connect the respondents to the needs in the parish and getting the word out on where to go if you would like to volunteer your talents. We are currently keeping track of all the wonderful and varied ministries in the parish and trying to improve communication among the leadership and members. In this work, we are constantly amazed at how much

volunteering goes into running a big and vibrant parish like St. Pat's and we are certainly grateful! Finally, our program has a **formation** or educational component. We are blessed to have a pastor who preaches passionately and eloquently on the subject of stewardship and we have heard outstanding lay testimony at Mass and in written form regarding the impact of stewardship on the lives of our fellow parishioners. This fall, we will have a week-long Parish Mission highlighting these stewardship concepts and hopefully bringing new energy to our efforts. We hope these programs are of assistance.

Question: Who is involved in stewardship at St. Patrick Church?

Answer: Everyone! You are involved in the prayer. You are involved in the welcoming and greeting. You are involved in our many ministries. You are participating in our common efforts to learn about the concepts of the spirituality of Christian stewardship...thank you for reading this newsletter! Each one of us has a public and private role in stewardship. Each one of us hears a call and each one of us has a unique response. We are grateful for each person's efforts and we all should feel supported in this community. As leaders and staff, we hope we are consistently modeling gratitude and saying "thank you" to all who are joined in these endeavors.

Question: Where can I go for more resources about Christian stewardship, and in particular, for more information about stewardship at St. Pat's?

Answer: There are many books, articles, videos and internet resources on the topic of stewardship as expressed in the Catholic tradition. An excellent first stop is the U.S. Bishops' Pastoral Letter on Stewardship entitled "Stewardship: A Disciple's Response" and is available at <http://www.usccb.org/stewardship/disciplesresponse.pdf>

Leaders and staff in the parish have been using this publication as a guide for our understanding of what it means to be a Christian steward. It is very readable and contains a list of further resources and suggestions for programming at the diocesan and parish level. If you would like a hard copy, please ask at the Parish office.

Those of us on the Stewardship Committee would welcome discussing stewardship with you or your ministry group at any time. Below are our names and contact information. Feel free to contact any one of us with your questions, your ideas and your enthusiasm on the topic of stewardship. Also, feel free to ask for more information about opportunities for you to share your time, talent and treasure with us. We hope this newsletter, our programs and these additional resources will assist you in responding to God's call to "live as stewards of His abundant gifts, for our salvation and His greater glory."

~ *Answers provided by Claire Zajac*

THE ST. PATRICK STEWARDSHIP

COMMITTEE:

Rosemary Alberg
Howard Cameron opeccameron@hotmail.com
Dan DeWitt
Dianne Evert
Rev. Virgil Heinin
Mark Matuga
John Rukavina
Cathy Smolinske
Joe Smrdel
Larry Wolf
Claire Zajac claire.m.zajac@healthpartners.com
Father John Parr

RECENT STEWARDSHIP MESSAGES FROM THE BULLETIN

LIVING A LIFE OF GRATITUDE

It is always a perfect time to reflect on the many things in our life which are gifts. Relationships, nature, new experiences, beauty, wonder, the list goes on. All good things come from God and for this we should be grateful. How are you living a life of gratitude? Here are some thoughts to ponder:

“We can only be said to be alive in those moments when our hearts are conscious of our treasures.” ~Thornton Wilder

“You say grace before meals. All right. But I say grace before the concert and the opera, and grace before the play and pantomime, and grace before I open a book, and grace before sketching, painting, swimming, fencing, boxing, walking, playing, dancing and grace before I dip the pen in the ink.” ~G.K. Chesterton

“God gave you a gift of 86,400 seconds today. Have you used one to say ‘thank you?’” ~William A. Ward

“Gratitude is the best attitude.” ~Author Unknown

Your Stewardship Committee sends you many “thank you’s” for all the sharing of gifts we see in our parish everyday! When you give of your time and talent with a grateful heart, you are truly using your gifts to serve others in His name. And we are very grateful.

~ 2/15/09

WHAT ARE YOU DOING WITH YOUR GOD-GIVEN GIFT OF TIME?

The economy is tanking. You, your friends, and your family members may be out of a job. It’s getting harder to pay bills. It feels like it will get worse before it gets better. You are spending more time worrying and dreading what is coming next. Does this sound like you? Is this how you’ve been spending your time lately?

St. Paul in Philippians 4:6-8 tells us, “*Don’t be anxious about anything but in everything by prayer and petition with thanksgiving, present your requests to God and the peace of God which transcends all understanding will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. Finally whatever is true and noble and right and pure and lovely and admirable, think about such things and the God of peace will be with you.*”

St. Paul is giving you a four part road map for how to deal with this kind of worldly stress:

- 1. WORRY ABOUT NOTHING.**
- 2. PRAY ABOUT EVERYTHING.**
- 3. THANK GOD IN ALL THINGS.**
- 4. THINK ABOUT THE RIGHT THINGS.**

Your friends at St. Patrick Parish say: “Come worship and pray with us”. During lent, make an extra effort to spend time in private prayer, reading scripture and joining with others in Eucharist. This use of your time will give you the courage to overcome your current stress and to joyfully accept the call to live as a disciple of Jesus. Will you spend your time this way and join us?

~ 3/1/09

THE MINISTRY OF HOSPITALITY

John Paul II wrote, “Welcoming our brothers and sisters with care and willingness must not be limited to extraordinary occasions but must become for all believers a habit of service in their daily lives” (Address to volunteer workers, March 8, 1997).

What Pope John Paul II said applies to all of us and how we welcome visitors and new members to St. Patrick parish. Every Sunday at the beginning of Mass we greet those around us. Let us reach out to those whom we do not know and invite them to be one with us as we celebrate the Eucharist together. Let us make every visitor and new member feel welcome. Let us introduce them to others in our parish. Let us invite them into our homes.

Our community and our church should be places where everyone feels at home. Guests should never feel that they are causing undue extra labor. In short, all that is really needed to be an excellent host is a loving heart, an open ear, and eyes that see Christ in each person who crosses the threshold.

~ 2/22/09