

St. Leo's

PARISH COMMUNITY

A Letter From Our Pastor

INTRODUCING OUR NEW PARISH STEWARDSHIP NEWSLETTER

Dear Parishioners,

Welcome to the first issue of our new monthly parish newsletter!

As our parish community continues to grow and develop stewardship as a way of life, we recognize the need for increased communication. Through this newsletter, we hope to share stories that will help us all to better understand who we are as Catholics and what we are doing as individual members of Christ's family. In upcoming issues, we will focus on what's going on in the St. Leo's community, and how those activities and events are changing hearts and minds and helping parishioners grow closer to Christ and each other. Each article will ultimately focus on Christ at work within our community through the stewardship way of life.

Our hope is that this newsletter will be a successful means for ongoing education and formation in our faith, and I pray it will be a vehicle through which you are informed and inspired to become more actively involved in the life of Christ and the parish.

Another way I hope to improve our parish's communication efforts is through a comprehensive parish survey that will be conducted in early 2019. Through the survey, I want to hear from you regarding our parish and its future. A survey will be mailed to each home, and then I will ask you to

continued on back cover



AUGUST 2018

Inside

- 2 What Does Stewardship Mean?
- 3 Making Prayer a Priority Through the Prayer Chain Ministry
- 4 St. Leo's Altar Servers "Take Pride" in Serving Their Faith Community
- 6 The Blessings of the Catholic Mass
- 7 Eucharistic Ministers of Holy Communion: *An Extraordinary Means of Service*

What Does
STEWARDSHIP
Mean?

What comes to mind when you hear the word “stewardship”?

Do you think of it as just another way to talk about money? Do you quickly dismiss it as a notion that has nothing to do with being Catholic?

Stewardship is actually a concept that is Scripturally based, and is absolutely vital to our life as Catholics. God tells us, in the very first book of the Old Testament, “Be fertile and multiply. Fill the earth and subdue it. Have dominion over the fish of the sea, the birds of the air and all the living things that move on the earth” (Gen 1:28).

What does that mean to us today? It simply means that God is telling us, “This is yours, so take care of it.” One of the first things God tells us to do is to be good stewards of the gifts He has entrusted to us!

The Old Testament is not the only place where we can find references to stewardship. Indeed, of the 36 parables in the New Testament, more than half of them deal with time, talent, possessions, or money. Therefore, if Jesus spoke of stewardship that much, it should be a very important part of our lives!

As Catholics, we refer to the three facets of stewardship as “time, talent, and treasure.” Although these are three concrete ways to express and measure stewardship, the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops tells us that stewardship is part of discipleship. Stewardship is a way of responding to God’s call in every aspect of our lives.

The Scriptures and Church traditions teach us one important point that cannot be overstated —

that stewardship is primarily based on our need to give in gratitude, not on the Church’s need to receive. Of course, both the Catholic Church and our particular parish will always need money. However, we are not asked to give simply to defray costs and fund charitable programs. We are instead asked to remember our need to gratefully return a portion of our time, talent, and treasure to God, recognizing all that He has given to us.

It is important to remember that stewardship is a way of life, and not a program. True Catholic stewardship involves an ongoing call to live as followers of Christ. It takes time to find and define personal goals. You can begin by examining your personal commitments to the parish. How do you live your faith in your daily life with your family and friends? How much time do you spend in daily prayer, going to Mass or being involved in parish ministries and activities? What percentage of your income should you give back to God every week? What talents do you have that could be used to strengthen our parish family?

The coming months will see us increasing and intensifying our education and communication on stewardship. We will be developing a better understanding of how stewardship is a way of responding to God’s call to discipleship. And with God’s help, changes will occur in each of our hearts as we devote ourselves to a stewardship renewal within our parish. Examine how you are currently responding to God’s call to stewardship. If God called you home tomorrow, would He proclaim, “Well done, my good and faithful servant”?

The Old Testament is not the only place where we can find references to stewardship. Indeed, of the 36 parables in the New Testament, more than half of them deal with time, talent, possessions, or money. Therefore, if Jesus spoke of stewardship that much, it should be a very important part of our lives!

MAKING PRAYER A PRIORITY

Through the Prayer Chain Ministry

Throughout her life, Beth Clemans has grown in wisdom, and this wisdom has enlightened her about what a wellspring of grace prayer can be in one's life.

"I have seen over the years how important prayer really is," she says. "I have always been a person of prayer, but I continue to grow more so as I age. I am beginning to think a lot more about what I am praying, as I pray. I really believe in the power of prayer. Deacon Bill Buchta really encourages us to pray, and I believe his words have been beneficial to our parish."

Beth's profound love for prayer and the good of our parish family has inspired her to coordinate the Prayer Chain at our parish.

"I first got involved with the Prayer Chain because I wanted to do something that was of service to the Lord and the people of our parish," she says.

Our parish Prayer Chain is made up of five smaller chains with six members each, including a head member. When a prayer request is submitted to Beth, she then notifies the head of each chain regarding the request. In turn, each head sends out the prayer request to each member of their chain, either by text or by email.

Overall, the Prayer Chain builds up the strength of our parish family, and helps everyone to feel the embrace of God's loving mercy.

"It really promotes community in our parish, and helps us to get to know one another better," Beth says.

Prayer Chain members also make an effort to pray for specific intentions as they arise.

"We have been praying for our young people, that they would keep their faith and take a good path in life," Beth says. "We also pray for a list of women who are in jail. I certainly hope we are making their lives easier by our prayers."

Members may pray in any way they like for the submitted intention, for any length of time. All information is kept confidential as much as possible, and first and last names are not used.

In addition to submitting prayer needs, the Prayer Chain encourages people to share reports of thanksgiving as well.

"The thanksgiving prayers we receive indicate the power of prayer," Beth says. "There are many times when someone calls in distress, and it is great to find out later that things have turned out well."

To those who are thinking about joining the Prayer Chain, Beth has some helpful words to share.

"Everyone is welcome!" she says. "We would love to have new members. I encourage others to consider it. We all have time to send a message to a friend, read the paper or watch the news. It takes no more time to send a message to the Prayer Chain to request prayers for a friend than to do any of these other things. Being a member of the Prayer Chain is not time consuming, yet it can be extremely beneficial."



"I have seen over the years how important prayer really is. I have always been a person of prayer, but I continue to grow more so as I age. I am beginning to think a lot more about what I am praying, as I pray. I really believe in the power of prayer."
— Beth Clemans

Those who would like to join in on this beautiful ministry of prayer may call Beth Clemans at 308-379-4442 and leave their contact information. To submit a prayer request, you may call or text Beth at this number, as well.

ST. LEO'S ALTAR SERVERS

"Take Pride" in Serving



To be honest, Zach Canfield only became an altar server because of his mother's insistence. Then, he began enjoying being an active part of the Mass and learning more about the liturgy. Years later, he still occasionally serves Mass, now as a college student, and values the experience more and more.

"The older I've gotten, the more questions I have been asked about my faith," says Zach, a senior at the University of Nebraska at Kearney. "While I don't know everything, I feel as though serving has helped me learn enough about the faith and our Mass so that I can answer most of the common questions people have."

St. Leo's altar servers are a vital part of the Mass, as they assist the priest and the clergy so that the liturgy can be conducted with grace and reverence.

"This enables the priest to focus on leading all present through word, prayer and the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass," says Jodi Stauffer, Director of Children and Family Ministries.

"The humble service of the altar servers helps eliminate distractions and enables other ministers to simplify their motions during liturgical services." Any youth in the fifth grade through the 12th grade who has been baptized and has made his or her First Communion and First Reconciliation is eligible to be an altar server. All servers attend training, which is held twice a year, led by Jodi and Karen Kulp.

In our diocese, young women are also eligible to serve as altar servers during a time when they, like our young men, are discerning their vocations.

"I take pride in saying that I was a female altar server," says an anonymous female college student. "I appreciate the opportunity to have been able to serve and wish those in our parish, church and diocese would take altar serving more seriously and realize its importance."

Being an altar server is a unique opportunity because it is a role in the Mass reserved specifically for our young people.

"It makes Mass less of a 'chore' and more of some of union with Christ that can't be accomplished in you with joy on Sunday!" — Mitch Fisher,

ALTAR SERVERS

Their Faith Community

This experience transforms the Mass for these young stewards.

“It makes Mass less of a ‘chore’ and more of something you GET to do,” says Mitch Fisher, a sophomore at the University of Nebraska—Lincoln. “It gives you a different feeling of union with Christ that can’t be accomplished in the pews. It makes Mass more enjoyable and fills you with joy on Sunday!”

While learning more about the Mass and engaging it in more deeply alongside their friends, our young altar servers also form relationships with our clergy.

“My favorite part was that being an altar server showed me that priests are just as human as the rest of us, as in they joke and laugh around,” says Devon Beck, a senior at Wayne State College.

In Jodi’s family, all of her children were altar servers until their Confirmation, after which they could choose another liturgical ministry in which to participate.

“Another way our youth benefit from being altar servers

is that they serve as role models for others as they grow in responsibility and teamwork,” Jodi says. “Most importantly, they are growing in their knowledge of our faith and increasing their personal relationship with Christ.”

Currently, St. Leo’s is in great need of more young people who desire to grow in their faith with their peers by serving as altar servers.

“There’s a lot of pride and humility that comes from this experience,” says Steven Stauffer, husband, father and former St. Leo’s altar server. “It helped me develop a deeper reverence for Mass — a greater appreciation for the flow and order. I also paid more attention to what was going on.”

Take this opportunity to speak with your son or daughter about becoming an altar server and giving back to their faith community here at St. Leo.

“When your child is serving, you do feel like you are teaching them what it means to be a servant of God,” says Jodi.



If you would like more information about becoming an altar server at St. Leo’s, please reach out to Jodi Stauffer at jodi@saintleos.org or 308-382-4753, ext. 14. Parents and young people can also visit saintleos.org/altar-servers.html to read the “Top Reasons to be an Altar Server” and view other helpful guides.

thing you GET to do. It gives you a different feeling the pews. It makes Mass more enjoyable and fills sophomore, University of Nebraska-Lincoln

The Blessings of the Catholic Mass

It is ironic that today, with all of the freedom of religion that we enjoy in the United States, many of us wonder why we must go to Mass on Sunday.

However, if we really understood what the Mass is and how we participate in the celebration, we would instead be asking why we are, as sinful human beings, blessed with the opportunity to participate in the holy Mass. If we simply understood and recognized that God's infinite goodness allows us to do so, we would be eager to go to Mass on Sunday and every other day of the week.

It is true, however, that all Catholics are obliged to "Keep holy the Lord's Day" by sharing in the Mass. But why are we obliged?

The Eucharistic Liturgy is the center of our faith. It is "the summit toward which all activity of the Church is directed" and it is "the font from which all her power flows" (Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy 10). It does not exhaust the activity of the Church, but is most certainly her greatest work.

The sacrifice of Christ on the cross is literally re-presented to the Father during Mass, and Christ allows us to join with Him in offering that sacrifice. Imagine our Lord and Savior dying on the cross for us right up the street. Imagine knowing that Mary is sitting at the foot of the cross with St. John, witnessing her Son giving Himself to the Father for the sake of all of us. Would we not run to be there? Would we not desire to share in His sacrifice, just as Mary did?

Believe it or not, the sacrifice of Calvary is really, truly happening at our parish, every time the Mass is offered.

Our participation in Mass gives us the strength and the graces we need to live our lives as Christ's



disciples. So, what does this mean for us?

This means we have a front row seat to the sacrifice of Calvary. Given such a gift, how can we not accept it?

We also have a chance to join in Jesus' sacrifice by offering our own prayers and petitions. As an example, what better gift could we give deceased loved ones than the offering of prayers for their souls in purgatory?

Most importantly, we have the opportunity to receive the Eucharist, followed by quiet time, when we offer sincere thanks and allow God's graces to fill us. Think of all you are missing when you do not properly prepare yourself to receive the Holy Eucharist.

We ought to joyfully head to Church each Sunday, eager to give God glory in the greatest way we can! Attending and actively participating in Mass every Sunday is our obligation as Catholics. But we should not allow the fact that our attendance is "required" to stop us from going. Nor should we allow our laziness to overshadow the amazing privilege and the many blessings that lay before us in the Mass.

The pope and the bishops direct us to participate in the Eucharistic Liturgy every Sunday because they know there is no better way to keep holy the Lord's day — giving God thanks for all He has done for us in the most powerful way possible. They know that, through the Mass, we gain the graces necessary to live our lives in this world.

Our ability to participate in the Mass is a wonderful gift, not a great burden. May Christ enlighten our minds and hearts to clearly see the wonders of the celebration, and give us great enthusiasm and eagerness to participate.

EUCCHARISTIC MINISTERS OF HOLY COMMUNION: *An Extraordinary Means of Service*



The moment a person receives the Eucharist — whether for the very first time or for the thousandth — is a deeply intimate and sacred one. In that instant, God, Creator of the entire universe, and His creature become one in a miraculous way. For, says St. Cyril of Alexandria, “as two pieces of wax fused together make one, so he who receives Holy Communion is so united with Christ that Christ is in him and he is in Christ.”

Recognizing this great mystery, St. Leo parishioners Dusty and Diana Hast say that they feel deeply privileged to serve as Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion for our parish.

“When you participate as a Eucharistic Minister, you have one of the highest honors of sharing Christ directly with your fellow parishioners,” Diana says. “You get to become part of another person’s very relationship

with Christ.”

“It’s just a real honor to bring the Body and Blood of Christ to the parish,” Dusty adds.

Dusty and Diana have been coordinating the Eucharistic Ministers for several years. Their job is to train, prepare and schedule Eucharistic Ministers so that there are always adequate servers for weekend liturgies.

“We try and train everybody that we can,” Dusty says. “Occasionally, we’ll also do a refresher course for those who have been involved in the ministry for a while. Trainings typically take around 30 minutes. We explain the responsibilities and procedures, and have new volunteers sign a paper stating that they are a practicing Catholic according to the Holy See.”

Though this ministry is simple in and of itself, Dusty and Diana both feel that it is a deeply spiritual and fulfilling one.

For in distributing our Eucharistic Lord to others, they can’t help but draw closer to Him in the process and be transfixed by Christ’s outpouring of love for His people.

“We’re here to help the priest distribute the Body and Blood of Christ to the parish at whatever Mass we are at,” Dusty says. “It is truly just an awesome feeling.”

Diana adds that this ministry is also a great gateway into other parish and ministry involvement. Not requiring any additional time, this ministry allows parishioners to “get their feet wet” when it comes to parish volunteerism.

“It’s a really great first step, because it allows you to get in there and know people without requiring any extra time,” Diana says. “Then, as you get more comfortable, you can begin pursuing other opportunities within the church.”

Currently, there is a real need for additional Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion. We invite all parishioners to consider joining this privileged ministry, drawing closer to God and His people through service. For more information or to sign up, please call the parish office at 308-382-4753.



New Parish Stewardship Newsletter continued from front cover

take the time to fill it out and return it as soon as possible. Your input will be very important, and it will give the Pastoral Council and me a better understanding of your thoughts about our parish.

This fall, we will conduct our Annual Stewardship Renewal. The Renewal is the time each year when we ask each other to re-prioritize the way we use God's gifts in the Church. It is the time we write down how we will become more devoted to Christ over the next year with our commitments of time (using my time on earth wisely; making time for personal prayer, family prayer, and quality time with friends and loved ones); talent (using God-given gifts to strengthen the Church through service to parish ministries and other activities), and treasure (the wise and just management of my financial resources; giving a proportionate

amount of my income to the parish).

As we strive to develop stewardship as a way of life at St. Leo's, the support and involvement of each individual parishioner is necessary to sustain the life of our parish. All of you have a place here, and all of you have a role to fill in the life of the parish as we live our lives as disciples of Christ.

May the Holy Spirit renew and refresh all of us as we work together to build our parish family through the use of our time, talent, and treasure.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Rev. Donald A. Buhrman
Pastor

LITURGY SCHEDULE

Daily Mass: 9 a.m., **Saturday:** 5 p.m., **Sunday:** 8 a.m. & 10:30 a.m.
Confession: Saturday 4 - 4:30 p.m. **Adoration:** First Friday of the Month, 9:30 a.m. - 1 p.m.
Abide Adoration: Fourth Sunday of the Month, 7 - 8 p.m.