



09.2014

Saint Paul

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

Building an Understanding of Stewardship Throughout our Parish Community

The St. Paul Stewardship Council

If you have the opportunity to talk with Chris Orłowski about his work as chair within the St. Paul Stewardship Council, be prepared to be impressed by his enthusiasm and excitement about the council's plans to enrich parish life at St. Paul.

The Stewardship Council, now in its third year, was organized by Fr. Doug, who personally invited parish members to join. The council – consisting of eight lay members and two priests – meets once a month.

“[Fr. Doug] emphasized the importance of having a Stewardship Council,” Chris says. “There weren’t many who said ‘no.’ We understood his vision and wanted to help out.”

During the council's first year, Fr. Doug provided direction while the members worked to define their roles as members. Last year, the council spent time defining their purpose and educating themselves. The group began working together in earnest during January of last year, with particular focus on setting the direction for the Stewardship Renewal held in the late fall.

“Last year was a great learning experience,” Chris says. “Our goal is to educate ourselves on stewardship. We have been reading and we’re following the Wichita Model of the four pillars of stewardship – hospitality, prayer, formation, and service. We have been focusing on the mechanics of stewardship.”

“This year the focus is on hospitality,” he continues. “These are the ministries that work within our hospitality ministry, such as greeters and ushers. We met with those leaders, emphasizing their importance and helping to educate them how they fit within the parish ministries.”



*A Christian Steward - Receives
God's gifts gratefully; Cherishes
and tends them responsibly;
Shares them in justice and love;
Returns them to God.*

– Stewardship: A Disciples Response

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The St. Paul Stewardship Council *continued from front cover*

Currently, the Stewardship Council is working on the mechanics of the administration of the Stewardship Renewal.

“We’re reviewing the catalogs, taking lessons from last year, and figuring out how to be better this year,” Chris says.

Plans for this fall include a Parish Retreat, with the goal of getting more parishioners involved in stewardship.

“After that, we’ll have a Leadership Gathering,” Chris says. “We want to emphasize where the ministry leaders’ role fits in parish life – the role they have in making stewardship a way of life. We want to develop a Ministry Leaders Guide, so the ministry leaders understand what Fr. Doug intends, and what responsibilities they have as ministry leaders.

“Once we refine it, we’ll discuss their role in the stewardship process and discuss the leadership catalog at the Leadership Gathering,” he continues. “With these two events leading to the Stewardship Renewal, we’ll have the right people in place and educated to go into the renewal.”

The council will also work to have a lay witness speak from the pulpit just before the renewal and before the renewal cards go out. The council is also refining the parish website for online renewal, which has worked well in the past.

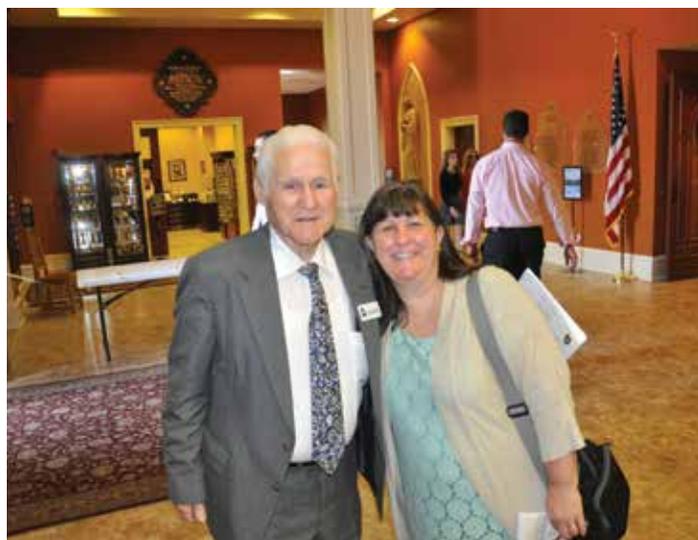
“Then we’ll go to the renewal period during Advent – beginning around Thanksgiving,” Chris says. “After the new year begins, the ministry leaders will begin to follow up with the folks who expressed interest in joining a particular ministry. The ministry leaders understand how we, the council, can help. It’s a team concept.”

The enthusiasm you will hear when talking to Chris comes not only from the benefits the parish will receive from the stewardship way of life, but it also comes from the growth of his own faith through working on the council.

“I had never understood the stewardship way of life before,” Chris says. “But being intimately involved in the process helped an awful lot. The understanding has been great.”

Chris is looking forward to watching things blossom at St. Paul as stewardship strengthens the parish.

“We can see it taking hold,” he says. “The people of St. Paul – [stewardship] is what we do and as we continue to do, it will grow and become stronger. It will only get better as we work with the Parish Council and the ministry leaders. Everyone better understands their roles.”



A Letter From Our Pastor

Let Us Renew Our Efforts to Give Out of Love as Good Stewards

Dear Parishioners,

If your calendar looks like mine, then we all know that everything is shifting back into “high gear,” as they say. Schools are back in session; most people are home from vacation; clubs, organizations and ministries are back at work full-time; and life is suddenly more hectic. As I looked at the calendar for September, certain things became obvious to me. These were accentuated by a comment someone made to me recently about how Pope Francis made them proud to be a Catholic.

I think I grasped the significance of that, and it has a September theme. We begin the month with Labor Day on the 1st. Last year Pope Francis said, “Work is fundamental to the dignity of a person... It gives one the ability to maintain oneself, one’s family, to contribute to the growth of one’s own nation.” That is certainly true as we honor our workers on Labor Day and reflect on the dignity of “labor.” Every human being enjoys a basic right to be respected – not because of any title, position, prestige, or accomplishment, but first of all because we are created in the image and likeness of God. God bless all those who labor. What we do to maintain the fabric of our culture through our work is not just a blessing, but an important part of our stewardship in relation to our lives and our society.

The second aspect of the September calendar that seemed significant to me was that Friday, Sept. 5, is the Feast Day of Blessed Mother Teresa of Calcutta. Small in stature, but so very Catholic in everything she represented and did, Blessed Teresa was an important part of my own perception of what it meant to be Catholic and Christian. It is difficult to believe that she has been gone for 17 years. She was the



absolute epitome of what it meant to be Catholic, to love and to serve. She represented a living example of stewardship in our lifetimes. What she had to say about our lives and how we should live them became some of the more quotable illustrations of living stewardship that we reflect upon today. For example, she said, “It is not how much we give, but how much love we put into giving.” That is our challenge as we begin the busy part of our year, to do everything we do with love.

Finally, on Sunday, Sept. 14 we celebrate The Exaltation of the Holy Cross. The Cross has enormous meaning to us as Catholics. How many times do we make the Sign of the Cross to signify the Holy Trinity and to remember that the Cross represents so much to us? It is a renewal of our Baptism every time we make the Sign of the Cross.

Some 1,700 years ago, St. Helen discovered the true cross in Jerusalem. The Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem was built on that spot, and it was dedicated on Sept. 14, 335, thus our veneration of the Cross on that date.

When we make the Sign of the Cross, we are also indicating our discipleship, our pledge to be good stewards. Whether it is in our labors that we glorify God, in serving the Lord and others with love, or constantly reminding ourselves of Christ’s salvation of us on the Cross, we need to constantly re-dedicate ourselves to service and stewardship. This month – when we revive so much in our parish – is a good time to do that. Blessed Mother Teresa also said, “The needs are great, and none of us, including me, ever do great things. But we can all do small things, with great love, and together we can do something wonderful.”

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Fr. Doug Halsema
Pastor



We Are All Qualified to Answer the Stewardship Call

When it comes to the demands of the Christian life – specifically the demands of parish life – how often do we ask ourselves if we are qualified to take on that role?

When presented with a chance to sign up for a certain ministry at our parish, we may believe that we lack certain skills and feel unworthy to step forward. We may simply be unwilling to take the first step toward becoming involved in parish life or don't feel we want to make time for the necessary training involved.

This reaction is the natural product of our fallen human nature. However, we cannot look at the Christian call from this perspective.

When God became man, He made His grace available to us so we could be like Him. Jesus commands us in Matthew, "Be perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect" (Mt 5:48). That is certainly a lot to ask. And while it is impossible for us to accomplish this solely by our own strength, God enables us to accomplish the impossible – but only when we make the decision to accept His grace and live up to the high calling He has bestowed upon us.

The antidote to the "unworthiness" disease that threatens the best of us can be summed up in one word – "magnanimity," a virtue with which most of us may be unfamiliar. The word itself is virtually extinct in the English language. It comes from the Latin words *magnus* and *anima*, which taken together mean "greatness of soul."

A magnanimous person is someone who sees the demands of the Christian life as a sea of endless possibilities with God's grace, and who determines to rise to the greatness to which God calls him. This person neither stops to count the cost, nor to measure his unworthiness. Magnanimity is not arrogance, because a magnanimous person recognizes that only by God's grace does he accomplish anything. Nor is it imprudence, since he strives only to do what God asks of him and nothing more.

Where can we find such people? Do they even exist in today's world? The lives of the saints stand as some of the best and most inspirational examples of magnanimous souls. Indeed, many of the most attractive saints were very ordinary people who became extraordinary simply because of their magnanimity.

St. Thérèse spent her short existence in total obscurity behind convent walls doing little acts with great love. Bl. Pier Giorgio Frassati, who never traveled the world preaching, touched the hearts of his friends and tirelessly served the poor in his own town. St. Gianna Beretta Molla just tried to be a good wife, mother and doctor. St. Peter led the entire Church, even though he only knew how to fish. St. Joseph, a simple carpenter, raised and cared for God Himself made man. Our Lady, nothing more than a young peasant girl, said, "Let it be done unto me," allowing God to become man. When examining history from the beginning of time, there is a detectable pattern – God almost always calls the most ordinary and seemingly unqualified people to accomplish His great works.

God is calling all of us to be magnanimous with our lives. Even in the small circle of our daily dealings – whether at home, work or in our parish – there are countless ways we can show that we are not afraid of what He might ask of us. The journey might not always be easy. But with God's grace, we can point our sails toward heaven with confidence, and never look back.

"The faith given to me in baptism suggests to me surely: by yourself you will do nothing, but if you have God as the center of all your action, then you will reach the goal."
- Bl. Pier Giorgio Frassati

Ministry Fosters Parish Hospitality

Welcome Stewards

Every Catholic parish should be a picture of hospitality. It is extremely important for parishes to be welcoming to visitors, new members and long-time parishioners alike. Here at St. Paul Catholic Church, our Welcome Stewards Ministry works to make sure our parish liturgies are warm and welcoming for all who attend.

“The main purpose is to provide parishioners the opportunity to greet people as they arrive at Mass,” says James Hodge, leader of the Welcome Stewards. “This gives them the opportunity to create a welcoming atmosphere and help all of our visitors feel welcomed.”

The members of the Welcome Stewards play several roles in the liturgy of the Mass. This ministry was recently established by combining the Greeters, Newcomers Welcoming Ministry, and the Ushers into one new ministry, with all the members working to make people feel welcome at Mass. There are currently about 20 ministers on the schedule, and there are several dedicated individuals who show up and add to the atmosphere even when they’re not scheduled.

“They genuinely care about the people,” James says. “I continue to be amazed just how much our ministers can tell you about new parishioners that they have no contact with outside of Mass. They can spend just one or two minutes talking to our parishioners every week, and you would think they have known them for years. For some of our parishioners, a warm hug or handshake is some of the best contact they are making with people in a given week, and our ministers strive to make sure everyone gets this, sometimes by more than one person.”

The services provided by the ministry members include welcoming parishioners and visitors as they arrive to



Mass, helping them find seats, directing people to the restrooms, and simply being there to meet any needs that may arise. The members are also encouraged to pass out worship aids, open doors for people, and answer basic housekeeping questions. They arrive 20 to 30 before Mass to make sure they are there to welcome people coming in.

“This is a great way for folks to get involved in the parish life,” James says. “Somewhere along the way, there was something that made them feel like St. Paul was the right parish for them, and this is a great way to spread whatever spoke to them to others and help grow our parish. Additionally, this is a relatively easy ministry to serve in — no prep, show up 30 minutes early, smile and serve others are really all there is to it — and it makes a huge difference in the Mass experience for our guests.”

But the real service provided by this ministry is the way it encourages hospitality and a sense of community in the parish.

“It keeps people coming back,” James says. “When our ministers do a good job, guests know that there is someone who genuinely cares for them

and will be there to ask them about their week next week. People seem to be refreshed by spending a couple minutes talking with a friend in the narthex prior to Mass, and the atmosphere becomes infectious and puts parishioners and visitors in the right mood prior to the Mass starting.”

This ministry is still growing, and there is a lot of room for new volunteers. For more information about the Welcome Stewards Ministry or to get involved, please call James Hodge at 850-380-7591.

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New Director of Music --- --- *Brings Extensive Experience to Parish Community*

This summer, Mr. Brian Brown began serving as our new director of Music at St. Paul. Brian has worked with our music department for the last four years as the Minister of Strings and Orchestral Music. He has also enjoyed quite an extensive career as both a performer and instructor of music. He has served as conductor of the Northwest Florida Symphony Youth Orchestra, and as principal violist of the Northwest Florida Symphony Orchestra.

As an instructor, Brian has served on the faculties of Northwest Florida State College and the Summer Trios Music Festival at both Bryn Mawr College and Wilson College. He studied violin and viola at San Francisco Conservatory of Music and Yale University, and he has taught secondary violin and viola at Yale.

Indeed, Brian brings years of extensive musical experience to our parish and liturgies. We congratulate him as he takes on this very important role at St. Paul!



A Look Back at the Steubenville-Atlanta Youth Conference Trip --- ---

This past July, 40 of our high school youth – along with seven chaperones – traveled to the Steubenville Atlanta Youth Conference. The students enjoyed a weekend of spiritual renewal and fellowship, as well as a fun trip to Six Flags.



Parish Community Shares in Food and Fellowship at Monthly Suppers

Now that summer is officially over, it is once again time for our monthly Fellowship Suppers to begin! Once each month, St. Paul hosts a Wednesday night supper from 5 p.m. to 7 p.m. The suppers are open to all parishioners, young and old, and all are encouraged to attend!

John and Jackie Dickinson are the coordinators of the Fellowship Supper Ministry – but good luck getting them to take credit for the wonderful work that they do for our parish! They are quick to point out that there are more than 60 parishioners who help with the suppers throughout the year, and they couldn't possibly make the suppers a success without the help of these faithful volunteers.

"We can't stress enough that this is not something that we do on our own!" Jackie says. "My husband oversees the kitchen, and I oversee all of the volunteers and everything that goes on in the parish center, including the serving lines, clean-up, etcetera. We know we could never do this without all of the volunteers!"

The cost for the Fellowship Supper is \$7 per adult and \$3 per child, with a family spending limit of \$25. Each month, Jackie hopes to see at least 180 parishioners attend each Fellowship Supper. That way all of the costs are covered, while leaving enough food left over to give to homeless shelters around town.

"We bring the excess food to programs like Loaves and Fishes and Appetite for Life that feed people daily," Jackie says. "We take excess food to feed homeless people or people who can't afford a good meal. My husband always seems to know exactly how much food to purchase so that we never run out and we always have 75 to 150 extra servings to bring to people in need."

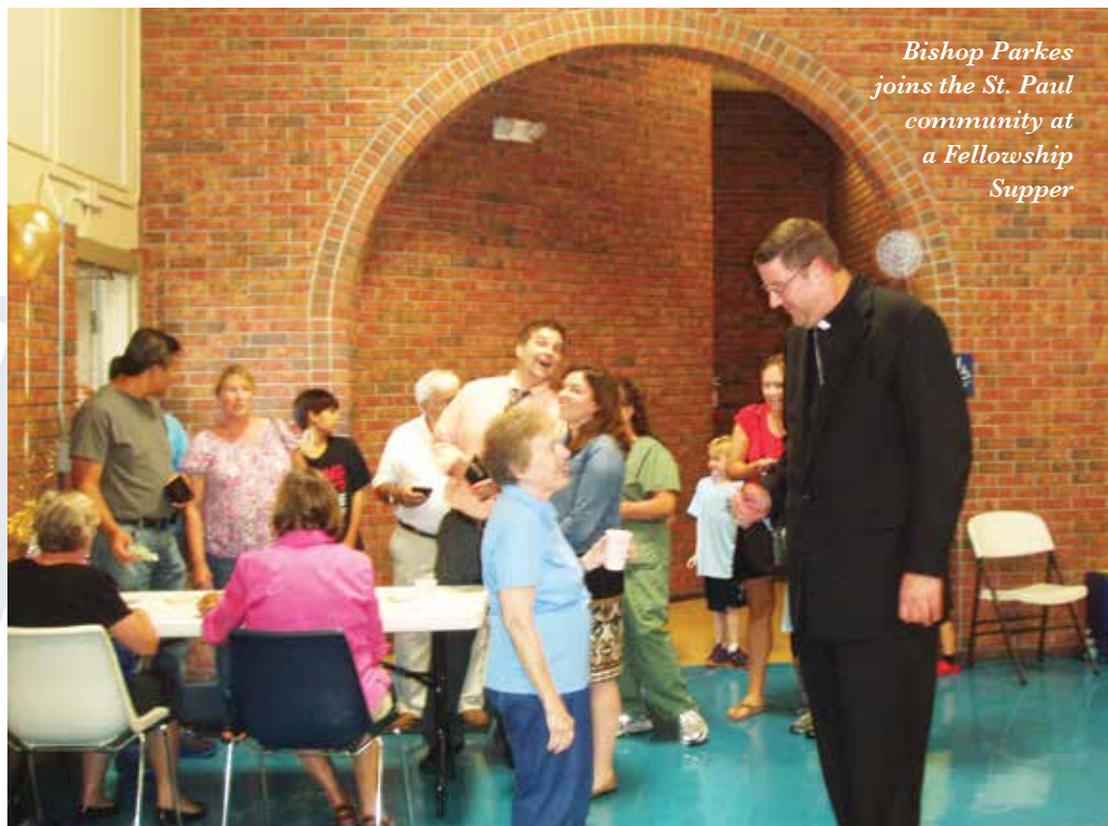
While the Fellowship Suppers are a great way to help give back to the community, they are also a wonderful opportunity to get to know other parishioners.

"Come share dinner with your fellow parishioners!" Jackie says. "It's a great time to come and meet other parishioners, enjoy a meal and have fun! We have a lot of regulars and we love to see new faces. We encourage people to introduce themselves to one another, to come and have dinner, see other parishioners, and hang out."

Each year in November, the Fellowship Supper team puts together a special Thanksgiving meal for the parish community. It is a home-cooked meal, made completely from scratch. Parishioners are asked to bring their favorite Thanksgiving dessert, but everything else is provided and the meal is regarded as fantastic each year!

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Bishop Parkes joins the St. Paul community at a Fellowship Supper

Address Service Requested

Monthly Suppers *continued from page 7*



While John and Jackie have a wonderful team of volunteers in place, they are always on the lookout for more help, especially for the Thanksgiving meal.

“Thanksgiving is a pretty big operation,” Jackie says. “We have 500 people attend. We deep-fry 40 turkeys and make everything from scratch. We need a big team of helpers! The Fellowship Suppers are a great way

to be involved in the parish, but it’s not a huge obligation since we only need help for an hour or two, especially for those who are coming straight from work!”

For more information on the Fellowship Suppers, or to volunteer to help, please contact John or Jackie Dickinson at 850-469-1941 or jdickin140@cox.net.

Liturgy Schedule

Saturday Vigil: 4:30 p.m. | **Sunday:** 9:00, 11:00 a.m., 6:00 p.m. | **Daily Mass:** Monday-Saturday, 8:30 a.m.
Confessions: Saturdays, 9:00 a.m., 3:30 p.m. - 4:15 p.m.,
most Sundays during 9:00 and 11:00 a.m. Mass, 1st Wednesdays, 6:30 p.m., and by appointment
Eucharistic Adoration: Thursday 9:00 a.m. until Friday 7:30 a.m.