

# STEWARDSHIP -IN-ACTION

TIME-TALENT-TREASURE

FEBRUARY 2009  
VOLUME 7; ISSUE 2

## STEWARDSHIP ANNUAL MISSION: SACRED MENU

“Would you leave a Christmas present unopened under the tree? How much more important are the gifts being offered by this mission.” If you were in attendance you certainly received those gifts. The Holy Spirit was at work each and every night.

This year’s parish mission, Sacred Menu, was held from February 8-11. The mission presenters, Fr. John Graden and Sr. Loretta Fahey, took our bodies and spirits through the Word and the Eucharistic celebration, using story, song, teaching, laughter, and tears.

Each night of the mission was based on a theme to help bring us closer to God in our lives. Sunday’s theme was Welcoming the Word. Fr. John and Sr. Loretta lead us through the Liturgy of the Word and its history in the mass. We shared our favorite Bible verses, and as a sign of the Word in us, all were invited forward. Each person held a Bible and prayed with it, to invite the Word of God into our hearts.

The theme of Monday evening was Take and Eat/Liturgy of the Eucharist. Fr. John and Sr. Loretta continued to lead us through the Liturgy of the Eucharist and its history, helping us understand how we are each a part of the Body of Christ. We shared a memory of our own First Communion with someone seated near us. We then once again came forward, this time to hold unconsecrated bread and wine, praying that we may be the nourishment to others in our lives.

Tuesday’s theme was Responding to the Divine Lover: Sin and Reconciliation. We were each given a piece of yarn when entering the church. Fr. John and Sr. Loretta lead us in what forgiveness is. Fr. John shared with us a prayer we can say when temptation rears its ugly head: I Am Not God (ending with a laugh). This is a way to help us remember that sin is present in our lives, it’s what we chose to do with it that can lead us down the wrong road. Throughout the evening, we were asked to tie knots in our string, showing that as the string gets shorter, we are drawn closer to God and his great love for us. We then had the opportunity to go to confession. After confessing our sins, we were to drop our knotted string into a basket as part of our penance.

The final evening of the mission was a celebration of the Eucharist, to be nourished through the Word and the Body and Blood of Christ, to go out and share our faith in the world. This mass was also celebrated as a memorial to Fr. Jim Walsh, retired St. Anthony pastor, who had died earlier in the week. We were nourished, strengthened, forgiven, challenged, and stretched to go out and share the good news according to our gifts and vocation in life. Each night ended with hospitality and fellowship.

Thank you Fr. John and Sr. Loretta for being with us for this mission, for sharing yourselves, and bringing us closer to Christ in our own lives. We are so blessed to be able to afford to bring such high caliber servants of the Lord to our small community to minister to us.



## THE STEWARDSHIP JOURNEY

By: Carol Fries

Are you onboard with Stewardship? If so, how comfortable are you with this lifestyle? Most of us are stewards whether we realize it or not. We just now have a name for our daily actions.

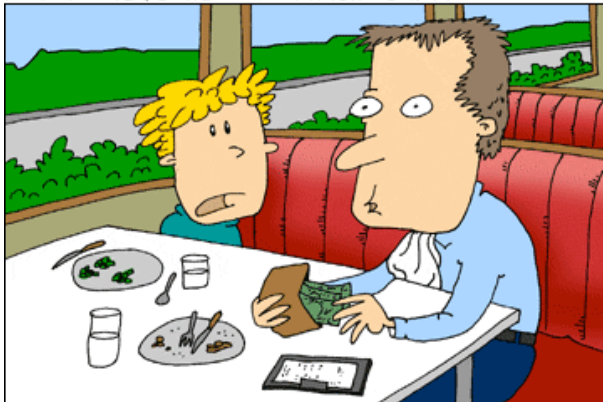
Stewardship comes in so many forms that there has to be something for everyone. Do you recycle plastic and paper? Then you are a steward of the environment! Do you help out with projects in our parish? Then you are a steward of your time and talent! Do you spend time in prayer or attend Mass? Then you are a steward of your faith! Do you donate to the parish food bank or to the St. Vincent de Paul Society? Then you are a steward of God's people.

Before joining the Stewardship Committee in the fall of 2007, I pretty much thought that Stewardship was not a vital part of our parish. Then, I did some online research and found that indeed we are a very active stewardship community. So much of what we do on a daily basis can be considered stewardship. Maybe I was just too focused on the monetary part of stewardship that I couldn't recognize all of the many acts of stewardship that surround us here at St. Mary's and St. Anthony's. That is not to say that tithing is not an important part to this lifestyle.

When Stewardship was first introduced at St. Mary's, my husband and I committed ourselves to doing our part. We are both very active in the parish (time & talent). That is the easy part. But, we also decided to commit 10% of our income to charity. A special checking account was set up and 10% is automatically deposited into this account. We know that anything in this account is to be given away. Our weekly donation to our parish, donations to St. Vincent de Paul and any other charities all come from this account. There are times when the balance in this account is too low to help out too many causes. But, just knowing that whatever money is there can be given to any cause that we believe in is such a fantastic feeling. Wouldn't it be great if everyone could have a special "donation" account of their own? Yes, income levels vary, but it's not about the dollar amount - it's about the sacrifice. Just remember how much Jesus sacrificed for us!

Everyone and everything in this world are gifts from God. It is up to you to decide how to use these gifts. Apply your time, talent and treasure; take ownership of what God has given you - life as a steward is pretty awesome!

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Thanks to Shirley Ostrander

01-15-2004

HOW COME THE WAITRESS GETS 15% AND GOD ONLY GETS 10%?

### A CLOSING PRAYER...

**GOD**, We want to make You our number one priority, but there are so many things to draw us away from you: Material things like bigger houses, bigger cars, distractions like too much TV, computer games; and addictions to things that make us less healthy. Help us to focus not on fulfilling our wants, but rather on how we can use the gifts you've given us to build up your kingdom. Thank you for the gifts you have given us and bless them so that we may use them as good stewards to carry out Your will. *Amen!*