

ST AGNES PARISH, READING, MA

April 3, 2016 Parish Stewardship Meeting

Agenda

UNDERSTAND; ENERGIZE; CONNECT

12:15 **Welcome** – Deacon David Southworth

Opening Prayer – Fr. Steve Rock

12:20 **Review & Overview** The Stewardship Council Initiative– Deacon Southworth

- **The Goal/Why.....** Build on Envision; Enliven St. Agnes with Stewardship Theme
- **Previous Meeting Summary - March 13, 2016....** Discussed Stewardship (Time, Talent, and Treasure).... Giftedness, Gratitude, Generosity... Establishing a Stewardship Council
- **Purpose/Agenda for this meeting...** talk more about Stewardship and what a Stewardship Council looks like
- **Case Study...** St Mary Magdalen Parish, Florida

12:30 **Understanding Stewardship** – What & Why? -- Fr. Bob Rivers

12:40 **Table Discussions** - Ann Southworth

- Do you understand Stewardship?
- Opportunities around Stewardship at St Agnes
- Challenges and Concerns around Stewardship at St Agnes

12:55 **A Stewardship Council:** -- Deacon Southworth

- Council members live and model stewardship
- Core Responsibilities (See handout)
- Possible Sub-Committees of Stewardship Council (See handout)
- Process to form the Stewardship Council (Liaison to Parish Council and Finance Council)
- **Three Year Timeline -**
 - ~ Form Stewardship Council – Spring 2016
 - ~ First 6 months Council - Education, Commitment & Action (Join a Subcommittee) – May to Oct 2016
 - ~ Ongoing Education of Parish on Stewardship (Gifts, Gratitude, Generosity) – May of 2016 ongoing
 - ~ Stewardship Council Retreat – Spring 2017
 - ~ Stewardship Fair, 3 Sundays – Fall 2017
 - ~ Gratitude Event – Fall 2017
 - ~ Stewardship Council Retreat – Spring 2018
 - ~ Stewardship Fair – Fall 2018
 - ~ Gratitude Event – Fall 2018

1:05 **Table Discussion** - Response/Reaction to what you've heard – Ann Southworth

1:20 **Next Meeting** Sunday, April 17, 2016 at 12:15pm – The 6 tasks of Stewardship Council

1:30 **Closing Prayer**

Scripture References on Stewardship

St. Agnes, by Fr. Bob Rivers

March 13, 2016

A) TREASURE

Matthew 6: 19-21 "Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust consume and where thieves break in and steal; but store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust consumes and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also."

Intercession: Sunday 16th Morning Prayer: "Give to your faithful, O Lord, a prayerful spirit of gratitude, that we may thank you for all your gifts."

"GABE UND AUFGABE"---"GIFT AND RESPONSIBILITY"

"Gratitude is an absolutely foundation of Christian life because of what we have received from God: gift, grace, blessing from God. Karl Barth: grace and gratitude go together like heaven and earth---grace evokes gratitude like a voice an echo." (p. 61, **Wilkie Au and Noreen Cannon Au, The Grateful Heart**).

B) GIFTS

Ephesians 2: 4-10 "But God, who is rich in mercy, because of the great love he had for us, even when we were dead in our transgressions, brought us to life with Christ (by grace you have been saved), raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavens in Christ Jesus, that in the ages to come he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus. For by grace you have been saved through faith and this is not from you, it is the gift of God; it is not from works, so no one may boast. For we are his handiwork, created in Christ Jesus for the good works that God has prepared in advance, that we should live in them."
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C) GRATITUDE

Ignatius: "Gratitude: The First Prelude is to ask for what I desire. Here it will be to ask for interior knowledge of all the great good I have received, in order that, stirred to profound gratitude, I may become able to love and serve the Divine Majesty in all things." **The Spiritual Exercises of Saint Ignatius, #233**

Ingratitude: "Ingratitude is the most abominable of all sins, and it is to be detested in the sight of the Creator and Lord by all of God's creations for it is the forgetting of the graces, benefits and blessings received." **Letters of Ignatius of Loyola, 55 quoted in Wilkie Au and Noreen Cannon, The Grateful Heart: Living the Christian Message, p. 61.**

Psalms

Psalm 92: "To give thanks to proclaim your love in the morning and your truth in the watches of the night.

Psalm 57: "my heart is ready, O God, my heart is ready. I will sing, I will sing your praise. Awake my soul, I will awake the dawn, I will thank you, Lord..."

Psalm 118: "GIVE THANKS TO THE LORD FOR HE IS GOOD, FOR HIS LOVE ENDURES FOREVER."

Psalm 100 "Enter his gates with thanksgiving and his courts with praise. Give thanks to him, bless his name."

Paul

Romans 1: ingratitude is a great sin

I Thessalonians 5: 16-7: "Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, in all circumstances give thanks."
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Phil 4:6: "Have no anxiety at all, but in everything by prayers and petition with thanksgiving make your requests known to God."

Col 3:15-16: "And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts...and be thankful. Let the word Christ dwell in you richly...and with gratitude in your hearts sing psalms, hymns, and whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus giving thanks to God the Father through him."

D) GENEROSITY

Ex. 34: 20: "No one shall appear before me empty handed."

"A society or an individual that cannot be grateful and generous are not blessed." **(RSRIVERS)**

II Corinthians 8-9: "I say this not by way of command, but to test the genuineness of your love we have for you, may you excel in this gracious act also."

INTERNATIONAL CATHOLIC STEWARDSHIP COUNCIL

The Archbishop Thomas J. Murphy Award is presented to a parish for its outstanding work in Christian stewardship formation in honor of the late Archbishop Thomas J. Murphy.

The 2014 Archbishop Thomas J. Murphy Award is presented to:

Saint Mary Magdalen Catholic Parish
Altamonte Springs, Florida (www.stmarymagdalen.org)

Saint Mary Magdalen Catholic Parish is a middle-class parish located in the suburban city of Altamonte Springs, Florida. It is composed primarily of Anglo and Hispanic parishioners. It was canonically designated a parish in 1959 and served 95 parishioners.



Located well outside the prime tourist areas of Central Florida, the parish was a stable and aging community when ten years ago, the pastoral council and finance council began to discern that the parish could be led to a greater sense of discipleship by embracing a stewardship way of life.

Beginning with prayer, in 2004 the parish leadership inaugurated an on-going stewardship effort, challenging the parish to growth and greater commitment to service in the name of Christ. This effort was met with whole-hearted support by the parish members.

During this ten year period of renewal, parish ministries and services grew from 90 to over 200 as parishioners became increasingly involved in the life of the parish. Sunday evening Scripture classes have reached new levels of popularity.

Involvement in family and marriage ministry has increased. The parish has made a concerted effort to reach out to those who have left, particularly in the 27-40 young adult age group. Youth ministers report that junior high and high school programs are not only filled, but students are bringing friends, both Catholic and non-Catholic, to join the activities.

Saint Mary Magdalen Parish, with an \$8.5 million annual operating budget, operates an Infant through Pre-K early learning center, as well as a K-8 school and an adult day care center. These ministries, as well as ministries serving the poor, are possible because 91.5% of those who give by name make a planned, proportionate, sacrificial commitment to parish funding.

Parishioners at Saint Mary Magdalen Parish are committed to the words of Archbishop Thomas J. Murphy: "The commitment to stewardship is a commitment to mission." By taking these words to heart, the parish has become a vibrant and growing community of disciples.

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What is Stewardship?.... Fr. Bob Rivers

1. What is the meaning of stewardship in the Catholic Church?

The word "stewardship" comes from the New Testament (I Corinthians 4:1); the Greek word "oikonomos" ("manager" or "steward") as to deal with practical aspects of life in the household, finances, etc. So, when speaking of the parish or the diocese in terms of "stewardship", we are dealing with the practical things that help us to deal with our Christian life in the church: money, using your gifts and talents, our time and commitments in the church.

2. Why is this so important in the parish?

We have a lot of parishioners who are living by common sense about our parish and our lives. But sometimes we need to be aware of attending to challenges, problems and practical wisdom to make the parish and our Christian life work better. So, for example, we have many parishioners who do not think that they have gifts. They do not identify and use their gifts in Christian life, parish life and the world. Sometimes parishioners do not think about these things.

Many times parishioners say: 80% of the work is only done by 20% of the parishioners. What about the 80% who do not use their gifts or time for important tasks for the Church and the world? Sometimes they are not willing to participate. Sometimes we have people who do not think about their gifts and time. They do not think about how important it is for them to make a difference by participating. What is important..... is to invite parishioners to participate with their gifts and time.

A large number of parishioners do not participate with treasure to the Church for lots of reasons. Catholics are not very good about donating treasure even among those who are actually participating in parish life. It will be important for us to understand why this is so and see if we can do something about this. Money is a spiritual issue. We need to pray, reflect on our gifts, and make decisions about how we use our treasure.

Stewardship is an invitation in our parish to educate ourselves about the practical aspects of managing our time, talent and treasure as Christians and parishes. We need learn and be educated about the reality of stewardship. We need to pray about things as a parish, and make decisions that can change our lives to be more

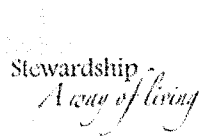
responsible disciples. Stewardship is what a disciple does with our time, talent and treasure.

3. What happens to us if we participate in this Stewardship in St. Agnes?

First of all, there is a powerful spiritual change in our lives. We are going to begin with the importance of emphasizing our understanding of our fundamental life as disciples. We will reflect on, and act on the importance of understanding our lives as a gift from God. Everything begins with **GIFT**. How important is this foundation of our lives.

When we start with understanding our lives as gift, the first things that happens is we develop a sense of **GRATITUDE**. Gratitude is way of life. But sometimes we forget about the gift and as a consequences we become ungrateful.

Finally, when we understand the importance of the **GIFT** of God and the gratitude to God, generosity follows. We cannot live our lives generously if we do not have a sense of these realities. **GIFT**, **GRATITUDE** and **GENEROSITY** are foundation virtues that are essential to Christian living and disciples. We need to spend time consistent with this awareness. This is what we will be doing, among other things, in participating in our Stewardship initiative at St Agnes.



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Formation of the Stewardship Council (from Oakland, CA Diocese)

The parish stewardship council is comprised of about 20 members. These members will be recognized in the parish as being spiritually motivated, people of prayer, and active in parish life. These members exemplify and live out stewardship as a way of life.

The stewardship council works in collaboration with the pastor. The core responsibilities of the stewardship council are listed below:

- Carry out the stewardship effort of time, talent, and treasure.
- Develop an annual stewardship plan
- Help to select individuals, families or couples to share their personal testimonies about stewardship.
- Prepare stewardship communications to the parish. (includes Homily themes: especially this Sept & Oct: 9/4 – Discipleship; 9/11 – Evangelization; 9/18 – Stewardship of Treasure; 9/25 – Justice and Generosity; 10/2- Gift, Gratitude and Service)
- Provide follow through of parishioners discerning a ministry. (Possibly use a “Discerning Gifts and Charisms” program)
- Evaluate stewardship efforts of the parish.
- Collaborate in developing effective welcome and Hospitality committees.
- Develop a vetting process of educational material to be used in the parish. (including the St. Agnes web site)
- Define and follow through with different avenues of giving thanks to parishioners and volunteers.

Possible Sub-Committees of the Stewardship Council

- 1) EDUCATION/COMMUNICATION
- 2) EVANGELIZATION OF THOSE HERE NOW....DEALING WITH PEOPLE OF PARISH/REALITY
- 3) FALL FESTIVAL 2017... WITNESSING
- 4) INVITING NEW PEOPLE IN PARISH...MEMBERSHIP
- 5) WORK ON GIFTS
- 6) RETREAT

Stewardship
A way of living

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ST AGNES STEWARDSHIP MEETING

SUNDAY, APRIL 3, 2016

Notes/ Questions: