

Giving Discovering Responding Praising Forgiving
 Feeding Thanking Sheltering Deciding Evangelizing
 Praying Clothing Building Renewing Creating Nurturing
 Celebrating Comforting Building Renewing Creating Nurturing
 Caring Forming
 Loving Sharing Inviting Visiting Growing Serving

Stewardship

CONNECTIONS

Office of Parish Stewardship, Diocese of Rockville Centre, NY

March, 2016

We Don't Just "Do" Stewardship – We Live It!

The word *Stewardship* evokes many different responses from people. Some will respond very positively, yet others may shy away. Some will even say that their Parish didn't "do" Stewardship *this year*, because they were "doing" other things. Stewardship is not a one-shot deal, band-aid or program, it is our discipleship – it is our life.

When Jesus said to us, "Come, follow me," he didn't mean just today or maybe next week if you have time. He meant for life. Discipleship is forever. Stewardship is a way of being that is incorporated into our daily lives; it plays a part in every decision we make.

When we speak of **Stewardship Renewal**, whether it be in the Spring or the Fall, we are speaking of a communal celebration. We formally renew our **commitment** to be active followers of Jesus twice a year together with our parish community. These renewals are followed by action whether by sharing our resources in thanksgiving or by offering our gifts through ministry. Though being an active follower of Jesus may begin and is sustained and fed through our parish and sacraments, the intention of discipleship is to be lived in the world. Remember, we should also renew our commitment to Jesus in our own hearts every day.

Why is this renewal, in some cases, met with disfavor? Could it be that a

commitment to stewardship calls for lasting change and action? Perhaps commitment itself presents its own challenges?

In many areas throughout our lives, we celebrate some kind of renewal. On Holy Thursday, every year, our priests gather together to renew their sacred vows in front of the community, yet they live out their

priesthood every day. As Catholic Christians, we renew our Baptismal promises every year at Easter. We live as Catholics every day, but come together as a community to renew our promises on the most sacred of days. We also celebrate birthdays and wedding anniversaries every year, sometimes renewing our vows in milestone years. Does this mean we only think about being married once a year? Or do we reflect on these vows nearly every day? How about a commitment to healthy living? This too requires daily (sometimes hourly!!) recommitment.

This sense of reflection and the renewal of our commitment to be disciples of Jesus should be present in our daily lives as Christian Stewards. Yes, commitment requires awareness, discipline and sacrifice and many times we are not perfect. But the journey of discipleship and renewal can bring great happiness and joy!

When we answer Jesus' challenge to discipleship with commitment and renewal then – and only then – we will not simply be "doing" Stewardship; we will be living it!

**Loving and Generous God,
 You are the Creator and Source of all that is and all that I am.
 Help me to recommit myself each day to the call to follow Your Son, Jesus.**

Strengthen me and give me courage to embrace my unique giftedness and discover who I am created to be.

Help me to share the gifts you have entrusted to me with love and in service for the purpose of building up your Kingdom.

I say "YES" to living in, and living as, Christ's Light.

Be with me always, as I move along on my faith journey.

**Through Christ, our Lord.
 Amen.**



A Way of Life

A Jubilee Year of Mercy!

This month's Jubilee Connection comes from Monsignor Donald Beckmann, Pastor of St. Ignatius Parish in Long Beach. Monsignor is a long time friend of stewardship and brings his own eloquence to this month's Year of Mercy bulletin insert. Thank you Monsignor!!



Stewardship Connections

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Stewardship
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Stewardship of Mercy

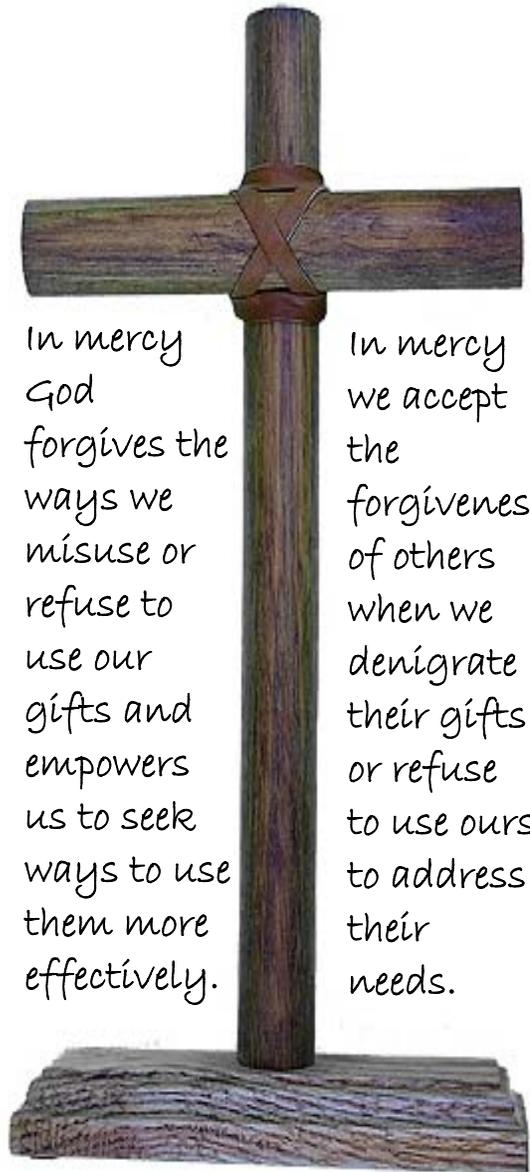
By Monsignor Donald Beckmann

Mercy is for losers. We hear that a lot these days. To be merciful is to cave in, to be walked over, to miss the opportunity to be successful. Just turn on the TV or open your tweets and you'll be instructed how to be strong – which means how to be aggressive and domineering. But is that true? Jesus is no loser. Easter celebrates him as victorious even over death. But on the cross he forgave those who were killing him. Pentecost celebrates the power of love as a mighty wind and blazing fire. But those touched by the Spirit on that day and ever after proclaimed a new life of mercy and reconciliation. The great paradox of Christianity is that we believe that the real winners in life are those who give themselves in love for others, not those who take in arrogant selfishness.

That's where mercy and stewardship become one. We accept the gifts of our lives, of our salvation and of our opportunities to love from our merciful and generous God. We treasure those gifts and use them to deepen love in our world. Mercy makes love a reality and not just a word. In mercy God forgives the ways we misuse or refuse to use our gifts and empowers us to seek ways to use them more effectively. In mercy we forgive our own mistakes and find in God's Spirit the courage to try again to build a more loving community. In mercy we accept the forgiveness of others when we denigrate their gifts or refuse to use ours to address their needs. Then we can learn to work together to use our gifts to bring healing and hope. In mercy we forgive those who have misused their gifts in ways hurtful to us as we, through proper use of our gifts, help them to turn from selfishness to love.

Mercy is for lovers and lovers are not losers. Oh yes, at times love hurts; stewardship costs. But the victory of the Cross we celebrate in Eastertide, the victory confirmed at Pentecost, is the victory of God's gifts to us and our use of those gifts to do our part to bring about a springtime of new life.

Mercy is for lovers and
Lovers are not losers.



In mercy
God
forgives the
ways we
misuse or
refuse to
use our
gifts and
empowers
us to seek
ways to use
them more
effectively.

In mercy
we accept
the
forgiveness
of others
when we
denigrate
their gifts
or refuse
to use ours
to address
their
needs.



A Way of Life

Gifts Celebrations!

Those parishes who honored their ministries with a large celebration this past year.

This month we highlight St. Kilian Parish in Farmingdale. As part of a larger Stewardship Renewal surrounding the theme, **“Gifted and Called,”** St. Kilian Parish chose to rejoice how the shared gifts of the community serve one another and build up the kingdom of God here on earth with a traditional ministry fair for their Gifts Celebration!

Our Ministry Fair - Spreading the Good News!

Submitted by Barbara Geary, Stewardship Director

Stewards celebrate! This past year we were very excited to once again gather people together to celebrate the many ways God has gifted our community. We are very blessed! More than 50 ministries gathered to celebrate and to share the many ways we respond to our baptismal call to use the gifts that God has given each of us to spread the Good News of His love and mercy and to reach out to those in need of His grace and care within our parish and beyond!

“a tremendous expression of our giftedness....”



The ministry fair celebration was also a gentle invitation to people to get involved and to participate in ministry for the first time or, for some, to participate even more deeply. After the fair, we had 125 new stewards offer themselves to serve in ministry! One of the most pleasant surprises, too, was that several people took the opportunity to register as new parishioners. In all, well over 1,000 parishioners visited our ministry tent, not to mention all the children who enjoyed the face painting and the bounce house!



Have a Parish Info Booth!
Great idea!!

A ministry celebration can be a lot of work, but when you take the time to ask people to help both in big ways and small it can be a tremendous expression of our giftedness.

“Well over 1,000 parishioners visited...!”



What a great way to share our hospitality, community and friendship—with and within—our wonderful and blessed St. Kilian family!



A Way of Life

Liturgical Resources

We hope you enjoy and utilize these Liturgical Resources for your Bulletin, Announcements and General Intercessions. Please know that they are also available on our website at www.stewardshipli.org → Special Leadership Section → This Week's Fax. Note: Bulletin Reflections are taken from **Stewardship By the Book**, author Sharon Hueckel)

AT A GLANCE... APRIL'S Stewardship Resources for Liturgy

April 3 - 2nd Sunday of Easter

Bulletin Reflection: "Blessed are they who have not seen and have believed," Jesus says in today's Gospel. For those who have not seen to believe, however, we must be good stewards of our faith, living it joyfully and sharing it generously.

Living Stewardship: We are grateful this week for all stewards in our parish who put their faith into action - especially through the spiritual and corporal works of mercy - even when they may not "see" the fruits of their service, relying on God's grace to do the rest!

General Intercession for Mass: That as Christian stewards, we will rely on our trust in God, especially in times of uncertainty, we pray to the Lord...✠



April 10 - 3rd Sunday of Easter

Bulletin Reflection: In today's Gospel, Jesus tells Peter again and again, "If you love Me, feed My sheep." He says the same to each of us, "If you love Me, use the gifts I have given you to serve your brothers and sisters."

Living Stewardship: We are grateful this week for all stewards of God's mercy in our parish who, out of love for Jesus, share their gifts of time, talent and resources to help one another, both within our parish as well as the wider community.

General Intercession for Mass: That as committed stewards, we may be ever mindful of the needs of our neighbor and seek to serve, we pray to the Lord...✠



April 17 - 4th Sunday of Easter

Bulletin Reflection: Paul and Barnabas encountered both violent rejection and joyful acceptance of the message that they preached. We, too, may meet with mixed reactions when we use our gifts in the service of God. But, the Gospel assures us, the reward for those who follow faithfully is eternal life.

Living Stewardship: We are grateful this week for all stewards in our parish who further the message and mission of Jesus through the spiritual work of mercy - to counsel the doubtful - by serving as a catechist or other educational minister.

General Intercession for Mass: That as merciful stewards, we seek to empty ourselves of all self-importance, so that we can become "stronger and more effective" witnesses to the Faith we proclaim, we pray to the Lord...✠



April 24 - 5th Sunday of Easter

Bulletin Reflection: In today's Gospel, Jesus give His disciples - and us - a new commandment: "Love one another." Good stewards who spend their time and talents in service to others are well on their way to fulfilling this commandment.

Living Stewardship: We are grateful this week for all stewards in our parish who give witness with a corporal work of mercy - welcoming the stranger - by sharing their gifts of hospitality with others through ministries such as greeters, ushers and welcome committee.

General Intercession for Mass: That as steward disciples, we may use our gifts to stand up for those who suffer oppression and injustice, we pray to the Lord...✠



A Way of Life