"There were Hands Everywhere!"

By Maureen Miedreich, Stewardship Coordinator - St. Catherine of Sienna, Franklin Square

This past fall, the “Hands of Christ” were very evident at St. Catherine of Sienna in Franklin Square. For the first time, our parish combined financial stewardship renewal with the renewal of time and talent. Our parishioner response to this united approach was overwhelmingly positive!

Beginning in early fall, we assembled the materials supporting time and talent, particularly our Ministry Directory, and mailed them to parishioners. Next, we invited witness speakers to tell their personal stories about how their service within a specific ministry was a way to share their gifts with others. By returning their gifts to God through such sharing, it became evident that lives were changed, each in a unique and positive way.

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GETTING READY FOR SPRING!

Temperatures will soon begin to rise and the ground will begin to thaw. You know what that means—Spring Renewal of Time and Talent is right around the corner and...we are planning!

* Renewal Workshops (see insert)
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Listeners could identify with these speakers and reflect on their own level of service within the parish.

After preparing bulletin inserts for the renewal period, we also substituted St. Teresa of Avila’s prayer for the weekly Stewardship prayer throughout the months of October and November. Changing the words of you/yours to I/mine provided a powerful shift in ownership as each parishioner recited St. Teresa’s words every Sunday before Mass. To reinforce this ownership, an activity was presented. We asked parishioners to trace their hand on an insert in the bulletin and complete the phrase “I am the ‘Hands of Christ’ when I...” in the center of the hand. The finished “hands” were then cut out and returned at Mass. These special inserts were also distributed to our school children, religious education children and Sienna Small Fries, etc. The response was tremendous!

Modeling good stewardship, the art teacher from St. Catherine’s school shared her talent by painting a picture of Jesus without His hands. We then placed all the cut-out “hands” around Jesus, spilling over onto the adjoining windows of the Sienna Center. There were hands everywhere! This marvelous painting continued to be displayed throughout November and was a highlight during the financial stewardship renewal.

A second mailing, dedicated to financial commitment, was prepared. Members of the Parish Finance Committee challenged the parishioners to reflect on God’s generosity in their lives and the ways we can respond to that generosity in gratitude. Almost 400 commitment cards were collected from our second mailing – double the parishioner response from previous years! Gratifyingly, many of the returned cards represented first time responders.

During the post-renewal evaluation, our Stewardship Committee agreed that combining the renewals is a lot of work at one time, but it was worth it. There is much validity in keeping the renewals of financial resources and time and talent separate. However, our parish is at a point where we are ready to re-connect the renewals and present a concentrated stewardship message. After many years of formation and foundation building, this process proved successful for our parish’s stewardship effort. We will be looking into possible ways of improving upon this idea for next year.

Thanks Maureen!
Several parishes have been considering the idea of “putting the renewal back together.” The original separation was to allow for a more focused effort and more time to prepare for each renewal, especially the gifts celebrations.

A handful of parishes in our diocese, like St. Catherine’s, are now confident that a united renewal of financial resources and Time and Talent can be achieved.

In support of our parishes, we will be addressing a “complete” renewal this coming fall.
Renewal News!

1. We are very pleased and excited to announce our Spring Stewardship Mini-Retreats with Fr. Larry Evans who asks “What does stewardship have to do with mud?” Fr. Larry will visit with us from the Archdiocese of Newark to share his talents and enthusiasm for stewardship on April 24 and/or 25th. Please see the insert for more information and registration.

2. We are also offering three refresher workshops to help prepare you for this spring’s Time and Talent Renewal. We will cover the basic elements of the renewal, gifts celebrations and tips for customizing parishioner materials. Descriptions, dates, locations and registration information can be found as an insert in this issue of “Connections.”

3. All Time and Talent Renewal materials templates, letters, graphics and more can be downloaded from our website at www.stewardshipli.org/lead.html beginning April 13th. Please check the Fax for any changes or updates. We will also provide each of these materials on CD. Materials order forms for posters, prayer cards and thank you cards will be mailed shortly.

Spring, 2007 Time and Talent Renewal Calendar

Sat./Sun., May 19/20: Stewardship Awareness Weekend

Mon., May 21: First Parish Mailing

Sat./Sun., May 26/27: Gifts Celebration Weekend (Pentecost, Memorial Day*)

Tue., May 29: Second Parish Mailing

Sat./Sun., June 2/3: Commitment Weekend

Sat./Sun., June 9/10: Follow-Up Weekend

*Depending on the attendance in your particular parish on this weekend, you may wish to change your Gifts Celebration accordingly.

Oh, Pentecost!

Several years ago at our parishes’ request, we promised that the Spring, Time and Talent renewal would be planned so that Gifts Celebration weekend would take place on Pentecost. A brilliant and fitting idea—what better time to celebrate our giftedness?!

Well, as you know, every few years Pentecost weekend is also Memorial Day Weekend (and that just happens to be this year). Some of our parishes will have more visitors and guests on this weekend while others may see a decline in normal participation. Either way, it is good to be conscious of the particular culture of your parish during Memorial Day Weekend.

Based on that culture, you may need to move, or better yet, extend your annual gifts celebration. Why not make the celebration of the gifts God has given your community last for two weekends or more?!

Perhaps a Litany of Ministries, a ministry banner procession or other celebratory piece on Pentecost followed by a larger celebration the following week will better satisfy your parish’s profile.

It is true that Pentecost is the most appropriate day to celebrate the coming of the Spirit, but why should we limit our celebration to just one day? We can joyfully recognize, celebrate and be grateful each day!
As stewards, we choose to live our lives in thanksgiving to our generous God. Our actions, our words—what we choose to do or not to do—are all examples of our gratitude. Christian stewards seek ways to share what we have been given.

One very important vehicle for exercising our stewardship is the Catholic Ministries Appeal. The CMA allows us an opportunity to share our gifts in many different ways.

Gift of Money: Of course, when we think of the Catholic Ministries Appeal, we think of sharing our financial resources. It would be silly not to! More than 500,000 of our sisters and brothers received support and assistance from the funds shared through the CMA last year.

It is rare that one person or one parish could touch this many lives. The CMA brings us beyond the individual, the group and the parish and unites us as one diocesan church. Oh, what we can do together!

Gifts of Time and Talent: In addition to money, the CMA offers opportunities to share our time and talent. Parishes often form CMA committees to support a smooth and organized Appeal effort. Or you may wish to share your gifts with the many volunteer ministries that the CMA supports. One of the great benefits of the Appeal is communication. People are informed of the many good works, programs and opportunities in this diocese. For example, you may wish to share your gifts as a Meals on Wheels volunteer, as a Catechist in the parish, as a participant in the Immersion Experience to our mission in the Dominican Republic or even take a step on the journey of our faith by attending adult faith formation offerings. The CMA tells of the good works of this diocese and communicates the opportunities to share our gifts beyond our money.

Gift of Prayer: The Catholic Ministries Appeal brings us closer to those we help and support. We can become more “connected” with our sisters and brothers through prayer. We may wish to pray for those who support the Appeal, those who volunteer, those who receive support and even those who cannot participate for whatever reason.

The Catholic Ministries Appeal is stewardship in action! Not just in sharing our financial resources, but our time, talent and prayer as well. Oh, what we can do together!

The Catholic Ministries Appeal
Allocation of Funds

100% of the funds shared through the Catholic Ministries Appeal are disbursed to aid these five areas. These funds provide a portion of the total funding needed.

2007 CMA Resources Available

- Instructional Leadership Manual.
- Brochures, posters, banners, pledge cards and envelopes.
- New website featuring monthly story highlights. www.drvc.org/cma.html
- New quarterly newsletter.
- CD containing bulletin inserts.
- DVD/VHS presentation hosted by veteran actress and long-time CMA supporter, Susan Lucci.
- CMA Presentation also available to view at www.drvc.org
- Speakers are available for weekend Masses.
- Personalized mailing options.

If you have any questions or would like to speak to someone about the CMA, please call us at 516-379-5210 x2.
Spring Cleaning

Spring is the perfect time for sprucing up—both inside and out!

After the cold and dormancy of winter, spring presents us with opportunities for reflection, renewal and new beginnings. Let’s recommit ourselves to the stewardship of our parish campus. Take some time to explore the grounds and buildings, not as an employee or long-time parishioner, but rather with the eyes of a newcomer. Bring a notebook and a pen and pay particular attention to things like:

Signage: Are your buildings clearly marked from the entrance to your campus to the exit?

Lighting: You may have beautiful and helpful signs, however, are they illuminated at night? Are the other important areas of your campus well lit?

Welcome: Upon entry into your parish building, is there a welcoming vestibule or waiting area with someone ready to assist? If this is logistically impossible, is there proper signage to direct visitors?

Greet: Is the first person of contact knowledgeable, patient and friendly?

Information: Is parish information organized and accessible to visitors? Do your welcome packets contain more than just the weekly offertory envelopes?

Deliveries: Is there a clearly marked area and/or procedure for delivering items after hours?

Campus Safety: Has the winter caused damage to your buildings and grounds? What is the condition of your roof tiles, parking lot and sidewalks?

Garden: Is your garden ministry getting in gear for the coming planting season?

These are simply a few suggestions to start you off with your spring cleaning! So, grab your pen and pad and take a walk around your campus. Make everyone’s journey welcoming and safe!

Happy Spring!

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Happy Jubilee to the Diocese of Rockville Centre!

This year we celebrate fifty years of living the gospel message as the Diocese of Rockville Centre. Our history has been one of “Faith lived, Faith prayed, Faith professed and Faith celebrated.” This theme for the jubilee was taken from the U.S. Catechism for Adults and describes the way we have expressed and continue to express our faith here on Long Island. As stated in Bishop William Murphy’s Anniversary Letter, “Every time an Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion brings the Eucharist to a hospital patient or we give our support to someone who mourns, or reach out to the poor and marginalized, faith is lived. Every time we gather as a community of faith at the table of the Lord, be it at Sunday Mass, a family wedding, or the death of a loved one, faith is celebrated. Every time good women and men sacrifice their time to teach a religious education class, or proclaim the Word of God at Mass, faith is professed. Every time we kneel before the Eucharist in adoration, petition the Lord in the silence of our hearts, or offer thanksgiving for the many gifts we have received, faith is prayed. These are the ways of gospel living, these are the ways we respond to the call of holiness charged to us at our baptism.” These are the ways we are stewards in today’s world.

In thanksgiving for our fifty years as a diocese, together we pray our Fiftieth Jubilee Prayer...

Sing joyfully to the LORD, all you lands; serve the LORD with gladness; come before him with joyful song.

Know that the LORD is God; he made us, his we are; his people, the flock he tends.

Enter his gates with thanksgiving, his courts with praise; Give thanks to him; bless his name.

The LORD is good; the LORD, whose kindness endures forever, and his faithfulness, to all generations.

Glory be...

Many parish and diocesan events are planned to mark this momentous year! For a listing of diocesan events and other jubilee information, please visit www.drvc.org and click on the Jubilee Anniversary logo.

Happy Jubilee!
Affirmations. Everyone enjoys hearing or seeing something positive. Sometimes a kind word is just what we need to get through the day. Sometimes a phrase or picture is what we need to refocus ourselves to remember why it is that we work so hard.

Frequently, as people involved in ministering to and with others, we forget to recharge our own spiritual or physical batteries. Short affirmations help us to do just that.

We were delighted to introduce the new Stewardship Message Window as our special gift to all participants at our stewardship events this year. These message windows can be "stuck" to your desk, computer monitor or anywhere else that you will see it often to provide a boost during the day.

We have been gathering stories of how our stewardship leaders fill their "windows" to inspire, focus and feed them as they go about the work of building God’s Kingdom.

Our first story comes to us from Ann Marie Cangelosi from Our Lady of Peace in Lynbrook. We hope that this is the first of many stories that help to affirm all of us as a community faithfully devoted to the Gospel message.

A window is a great architectural invention! It can improve the look of a home, contribute to significant energy savings in heating and cooling, is available as a replacement or new addition and comes in a variety of styles, colors and types of glass. In fact, windows are a lot like people - both are at their best when they perform the function for which they were created! And, our “windows” were created to affirm, inspire and boost all those who look at them.

Hey Ann Marie, what's in YOUR window?

Anne Marie Cangelosi at Our Lady of Peace, Lynbrook knows the value of a good window and routinely reads the messages in her Stewardship window “to do whatever I can, when I can, the best I can.” As a member of the body of Christ “who has no trouble multi-tasking and always being available to help other staff members with their projects and programs” she values the small windows on the corner of her computer monitor with their equally brief messages.

Inspired by a previous choice - Christ be Our Light - to “help me see the big picture and to avoid obsessing over the little things that really don’t matter,” Anne Marie’s most recent selections can be clearly seen in the picture below. Both window messages provide a focus for her Lenten goals this season -“to fast from that which is negative and does not enrich my being…to give a little extra of my time, talents and treasure to my parish community,” complemented by another message that “reminds me to spend more time in daily prayer and spiritual reflection through reading to better develop this habit throughout the year.”

Spring is a great time for fresh window “treatments.” Instead of new drapes, screens or hardware, maybe it’s time to update your window to better reflect your current goal a good steward.

So, what’s in YOUR window?

For sample window messages, please visit www.stewardshipli.org/lead.html and follow the links to download. If you did not receive a Stewardship Message Window frame-or if you would like us to send you color printouts of the messages-give us a call! 516-379-4055 x3
A Model to Follow

As Christian stewards, we look to Jesus as our example of the perfect steward. There are many stories that teach us how to live as God wants us to live. One of the greatest examples of Jesus as steward can be found in the Gospel of St. John. During the Last Supper, Jesus washed the feet of His disciples. Why would He do this?

Jesus taught us that a great leader serves others. He also taught us that as His followers, we need to take care of, love and serve each other as well. We do as Jesus asks every time we are kind, generous and helpful to others—every time we are good stewards!

Fill in the missing words from what Jesus said to His first disciples to reveal a message for you to follow as a disciple today. Then tell how you can be of service to others in your day.

“If I, therefore, the ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ and teacher, have ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ your ___ ___ ___ ___, you ought to wash one ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ’S feet. I have ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ you a model to ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ , so that as I have ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ for you, you ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ also do.” (John 13:14-15)

I can follow Jesus' example of service at home by _______________________________________

I can follow Jesus' example of service at school by _______________________________________

I can follow Jesus' example of service in my Church community by _________________________
Christ has no body now but yours. No hands, no feet on earth but yours. Yours are the eyes through which He looks compassion on this world. Christ has no body now on earth but yours. - St. Teresa of Avila