

**A Communication Vehicle of the
Office of Parish Stewardship
Diocese of Rockville Centre
New York**

Stewardship

A Way of Life

**** Special Issue January, 2009 ****

Come and Journey...

“Happy Thanksgiving,” “Happy Advent,” “Merry Christmas,” “Happy New Year,” Happy Valentine’s Day?” Did we miss something? Yes, we did!

There are many celebrations in our liturgies and tradition that are so enriching and life-giving. Unfortunately, society is such that we are constantly rushing to the next thing. We seem to live in a “hurry up so we can get it done-say we did it and move on” world. Moving can be good, yes, but journeying is better.

As our journey through Advent comes to a close, we burst into celebrating Christmas and, rightly so! God is with us-Emmanuel! What greater gift could we receive?! We celebrate, rejoice and mark the day God emptied God’s self to become one with us.

So, “Merry Christmas” let’s pack up the tree and decorations and move on. After all, things are on sale! Not so fast, pause, the journey has just begun.



An Epiphany about Epiphany

If we define, or at least check the thesaurus, the word journey is synonymous with “traveling around,” “exploration,” “discovery,” “adventure,” “voyaging.” These are active words. On our active journey as stewards of our faith, we try to remain conscious.



Conscious of planned, Christ-centered and responsible decisions. This way of living requires us, at times, to pause-reflect-and then act.

As we continue the journey after Christmas and honoring Mary on January 1, we should pause momentarily and celebrate another journey. As scripture enlightens us, three travelers from the east with only a star as their guide set out to discover and worship the Messiah. They brought gifts as a sign of recognition and gratitude for what God had given them. We learn from these expressions of giving.

Epiphany - “to manifest,” “to show,” “to reveal.” The Feast of the Epiphany celebrates God’s revelation to us in Jesus. And like the Magi, we too mark this revelation by the

In This Issue

- Come and Journey... (pg. 1)
- An Epiphany about Epiphany (pg. 1-2)
- Epiphany Pageant (pg. 2-3)
- An Epiphany Home Blessing (pg. 2)
- Looking Ahead (pg. 3)
- Gatherings (pg. 4)



sharing of gifts. God gives us Jesus, we journey to find and embrace Jesus and when we do we share gifts out of gratitude for all God has done. As Christian stewards, the Epiphany never ends.

As Christian stewards, the Epiphany never ends.

Let's journey further.

Stewardship teaches us that we are to receive God's gifts gratefully, use them and return them with increase. God repeatedly gives us the ultimate example! Every time we share our gifts out of love and gratitude to God, God receives, uses and returns them to us as the living Jesus. Think about it. Bread and wine begin as gifts of wheat and grapes. Through the work of our hands (also gifted by God) they become bread and wine that we offer back to God as gift. We pray that these gifts are accepted. They are not only accepted, but then transformed and given back to us with uncountable increase. God, once again, gives us Jesus.

Every time we share our gifts out of love and gratitude to God, God receives, uses and returns them to us as the living Jesus.

When we participate in ministry, we use the gifts God has given us. We offer our time and talents as gift to God. Those gifts are accepted and returned to us as Jesus.

This time through the use of our hands, heart and voice we bring the love of Jesus to whom we minister. In doing so, Christ is revealed to us as well in those who receive.

Because we journey as conscious stewards, the revelation of God and the Kingdom are constantly available to us. We must pause and take the time to reflect and use these moments to journey forward.

Speaking of journeying forward, our Christmas season will end shortly with the Baptism of Our Lord—the beginning of Jesus' public ministry. What a time for Christian stewards to pause—reflect—and then—act!



An Epiphany Pageant

By Vincent Whitfield, Director of Religious Formation
Church of St. Rosalie, Hampton Bays

In December 2007, our parish's children and young people were all rehearsed, ready and anxiously awaiting our annual Christmas Pageant when...snow! Yes, snow, and lots of it. However, the tough decision that was made to close that day led to something really fun and new for us. We would still have our pageant only now we would use it to celebrate the Feast of the Epiphany. Admittedly, I first thought the idea would not go over well—but oh, how I was reminded to have faith in the Holy Spirit! The reaction to the move was truly positive.

Although pageants celebrating the Epiphany are popular in other parts of the world (*El Dia de Los Reyes*, etc.)

An Epiphany Home Blessing

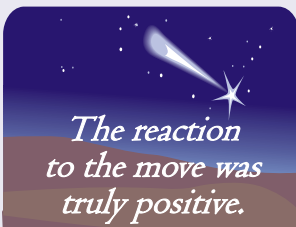
Lord God bless this home, and those who enter it, so that there may be health, generosity and love. Help us to live as stewards of the Way; to care for the sick, embrace the poor and welcome our neighbor. Let us be living witnesses of the goodness of Christ and make our hands one with His as together we serve in our world.

Amen.

20+C+M+B+09

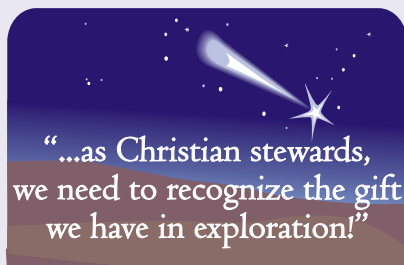


our American experience says 'not so.' After the pageant, the reaction from everyone involved, from the children up to the parents and guests, led to the decision that we would be having an annual Epiphany Pageant from now on!



This was a good catechetical moment - the opportunity to extend our awareness and celebration of the *entire* Christmas season. It lasts a lot longer than just Christmas Day. And having an Epiphany Pageant has opened us up to even more questions. What can we do to help everyone celebrate the entire Christmas Season? When should our Christmas decorations really come down? How can our children celebrate the Feast of the Baptism of the Lord? These questions (and more) may remain unanswered at the moment but, as Christian stewards, we need to recognize the gift we have in exploration! But, where to start?

To begin with, I would encourage you to think about having an Epiphany Pageant in the future. Hopefully, the reaction you



receive will be as positive as it has been here at St. Rosalie's. (Besides, your Pageant Parents and ministers will be thankful for the time to breathe before Christmas!) Afterwards, start asking about other ways your parish can celebrate Epiphany and the other feasts that make up the Christmas Season? What about Holy Family? Mary, the Mother of God? The Baptism of the Lord?

May your exploration be a fruitful, wonder-filled journey!



Looking Ahead!

(while you are pausing...)

Here is just a sneak peek at what you can expect from our next issue of *Connections*!

- ◆ Stewardship Calendar Contest Details
- ◆ "The Body of Christ ~Amen" Symposium Recap & Photo Album
- ◆ A Word from our Sponsors
- ◆ Symposium DVD Order form!
- ◆ Time and Talent Renewal Calendar
- ◆ Tips for "Going Green"
- ◆ Children's Activity
- ◆ And More!

If you know someone who would benefit from subscribing to the **Connections** Newsletter, let them know that they can register online! All you have to do is visit us on the web at

www.stewardshipli.org/lead.html

Follow the link to "Newsletters" and choose to receive either the mailed hardcopy version or Electronic Delivery! You will receive an e-mail from our Office when the latest issue is "live" and a link to get there.

You can also *change* your subscription to Electronic Delivery and help us save paper, money and postage!!





Office of Parish Stewardship

DIOCESE OF ROCKVILLE CENTRE
P.O. Box 9023
Rockville Centre, NY 11571-9023
Phone: **516-379-4055 x3** Fax: **516-379-3234**
e-mail: **stewardship@drvc.org**
Web: **www.stewardshipli.org**

Laurie Whitfield
Georgena McCandless

Associate Director
Program Services Coordinator

NON-PROFIT ORG.
U.S. Postage
PAID
Permit No. 737
Rockville Centre, NY

C O N N E C T I O N S

Stewardship affects all aspects of what we say and do as Church.

New Year Leadership Gatherings!

Tuesday
January 13, 2009
12:30 pm - 3:00 pm
St. Sylvester, Medford
Parish Center
Lunch will be served!

Wednesday
January 14, 2009
12:30 pm - 3:00 pm
Corpus Christi, Mineola
Fitzgerald Hall
Lower Church
Lunch will be served!

Don't forget to R.S.V.P. 516-379-4055 X3
(Just in case it snows!)

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

Stewardship



A Way of Life