

**St. Catherine of Genoa  
Stewardship Commission Meeting  
May 13, 2008**

Those present included Fr. Tim Seigel, Fr. Piasecki (from St. Mary's in Aurora) Jill Hansen, Linda Dolder, Wendy Engels and Beth Gehringer.

We opened the meeting with the readings from the Solemnity of the Most Holy Trinity.

Fr. Seigel introduced Fr. Piasecki from St. Mary's Parish in Aurora. **In looking for ways to be a stewardship parish the commission had decided to assist another parish in our diocese that was in need of help. We had invited Fr. Piasecki to speak to us about his parish and how we at St. Catherine's may be able to help his parish.** Fr. Piasecki distributed a fact sheet and gave us an introduction to his parish.

St. Mary's parish is the oldest parish in Aurora. In the early years, as the most established church in Aurora, St. Mary's was called on to provide assistance to new parishes as they were established. Since that time new ethnic groups have moved into this area of Aurora. Now most parishioners are Hispanic along with some older, retired English speaking members. The Spanish masses are very well attended at St. Mary's but the congregation is very transient with many not registering with the parish. Because of this there is not the consistent financial support of the parish by those attending the Spanish masses. Father and his secretary are the only paid staff members. They take care of everything for the parish as best they can. A lot of maintenance is needed in the church and the old school. Father indicated that St. Mary's has a good finance council. They have managed to barely break even financially due to some fundraising and a bequest from a former pastor. Father was also pleased to mention that St. Mary's has established a stewardship commission.

Our parishes are alike in that we both have two very distinct groups of parishioners that are not connected. Resentment remains at St. Mary's due to the differences in cultures. It is difficult to get the English and Spanish speaking parishioners to feel united as one parish. We, at St. Catherine's, have also been looking at ways to connect the English speaking and Spanish speaking members of our parish.

In recognition of our new partnership with St. Mary's Fr. Seigel presented a check to Fr. Piasecki for \$1,600.00. We also pledged to assist St. Mary's with maintenance issues and any other needs. We all acknowledged the need to create a plan for our new relationship. Fr. Piasecki would be happy to speak to the parish in the future about St. Mary's and our new relationship. Fr. Piasecki will discuss ways that we may be able to help the parish with his buildings and grounds commission. He will keep in contact with us during this process.

After Fr. Piasecki left we discussed ways in which we could assist St. Mary's. This relationship could create a lot of opportunities for stewardship for both parishes. We'll trust in the Lord to lead us toward a concrete plan. Some ideas mentioned to help St. Mary's included a food collection, school supplies drive and having the Knights of Columbus sponsor a work day in Aurora.

**We discussed the May stewardship flyer "Grace in Action."** The topic was technology and its ability to allow us to become disconnected with the world around us. All the new electronic gadgets, while intriguing, can easily distract us from what is most important in life. We need to be careful not to let technology rob us from opportunities to be connected with our family and the Lord.

### **Diocesan Stewardship Update**

As of today we have received \$32,852 in pledges. This is over our diocesan goal of \$30,470. This figure is \$650 short of our parish goal. The number of people making a pledge is 134. This is short of our parish goal of 170 pledges. We are very proud of what the parish has accomplished so far. We reviewed the stewardship calendar with respect to Diocesan Stewardship. All of the thank you notes have been sent. We have highlighted our progress each week in the bulletin. A letter will be going out to all active

parishioners that haven't pledged yet. The diocese will follow up this summer and fall with those that haven't pledged yet. Last year we received a \$5,000 refund from the diocese because we went over our goal.

### **Diocesan Stewardship Process Evaluation**

We discussed the pledge weekend. The in-church method has worked out well for us. This year we didn't have a speaker and didn't do much promotion of the event. It was different this year because Fr. Seigel was not here during the pledge weekend. Father believes this worked out better having the pledge weekend a week early because we then could concentrate on Ascension Sunday. The rest of the diocese held the pledge weekend on Ascension Sunday. Maybe we shouldn't worry about changing the way we do things for Diocesan Stewardship next year. Maybe people gave more because we didn't put so much emphasis on money. This fall we can focus more on the treasure pledge process.

### **Children's Essay/Poster Update**

We felt this was a good start this year and would like to do this again next year. The essays will be published in the bulletin. This is a good example of stewardship education. Adults will see what the children are learning about. We did have trouble advertising this event. Next time we may want to mail information home to the religious education students.

### **Environmental Stewardship Update**

Wendy will organize a collection of light bulbs to be used around the church. Jill and Beth will continue looking for bags that we can affix a logo to. The bags that Jill found so far were somewhat costly.

### **Next Meeting**

This meeting is the last one before the fall. We decided to meet in early August to get a head start on planning for Time/Talent/Treasure. We also want to discuss what to do next about planning for our work with St. Mary's. We should bring up our plan about this new relationship we have with St. Mary's to the other councils of the parish for their input. We may want to try to organize a school supply drive for St. Mary's in August.

We want to also brainstorm about stewardship ideas for next year. Ideas we want to discuss include: 1) having a collection basket up in front of the altar and allow the children to come up to give their offerings; 2) deciding on a charity to contribute our stewardship treasure to each month; and 3) come up with a concrete plan for our relationship with St. Mary's.

The next meeting is scheduled for August 5, 2008.

Father closed with a prayer.

Submitted by  
Beth Gehringer, Secretary