

**St. Catherine of Genoa
Stewardship Commission Meeting
January 13, 2009**

Those present included Fr. Tim Seigel, Jill Hansen, Linda Dolder, Wendy Engles, Beth Gehringer, and Jason Fletcher.

We opened the meeting with a prayer service that included the readings for this Sunday. We shared instances of when we felt God's presence with us.

We discussed Chapter 2 and 5 of "Stewardship-A Parish Handbook." Chapter Two focused on three important areas of a successful stewardship parish: prayer, hospitality and service. We discussed how prayer enhances worship at St. Catherine's and what our prayers were for the parish. We'd like to reach out to those who have went astray from the parish, pray for unity in our parish, look for more participation in the mass and healing in the parish. This chapter also mentioned the major factors that encouraged or discouraged giving including effective preaching, pastoral visits, staff community leadership, open discussions of parish decisions, good morale and the extent to which the majority of parishioners are actively involved. Hospitality in our parish has increased. The greeters at mass have been very successful at promoting hospitality. The welcoming bags and lap warmers are very much appreciated. The parish hospitality group would like to host more social activities.

Chapter Five talked about establishing a stewardship committee and the duties of the committee. We reviewed the sample responsibilities listed. Some ideas we may want to implement are organizing a ministry fair and encouraging support for stewardship through the prayers of the faithful at mass.

Time, Talent and Treasure

Jill distributed details of the time, talent and treasure pledge drives last fall. There was a 30% increase in the number of ministries checked on the pledge cards. This increase was due to the fact that we didn't remove names of parishioners that continued in a particular ministry. The total number of parish members increased 8%. Because we have more members we should be able to get more pledges. Seventeen less families made pledges but we saw a \$12,000 increase in money pledged. We compared money pledged from 2007 and the present. Last year we didn't hold a treasure pledge drive because of the capital campaign for the elevator.

We reviewed the letter we will send to those parishioners that did not return a treasure pledge card. We will include a statement defining this treasure appeal as commitment to the weekly offering.

Parish Stewardship Education

Jill passed out examples of commitment cards from other parishes. These cards would be distributed to all parishioners. After parishioners performed an "Hour of Service" to the parish they would return the card and add it to a bulletin board. We would hope to see the board filled up representing all the time and talent that was given back to the parish. We also reviewed the brochure from St. John Neumann Parish explaining stewardship. What does our parish want to do in this regard? Now we are only adding information blurbs in the bulletin about stewardship.

We discussed what a Green Bay, Wisconsin parish does to promote stewardship. They listed 25 random acts of stewardship and distributed the list to parishioners. This encouraged parishioners to think of stewardship every day. We could print the list on colored paper or cards and have the stewardship commission distribute them after mass. We could also pick out a couple of ideas to do each year (all year long). We may be able to create a magnet with one of the slogans and sell them (or ask for a donation). This is something we'll want to do at a later time. We could ask if this parish would be willing to come down and speak to us. Maybe they could give a presentation or a workshop. We could invite other parishes in our area as well. This may be something that

may be appropriate as an adult education presentation. Review the ideas on the stewardship handout and bring suggestions of what we could do to the next meeting. We need more bulletin board space to use for stewardship education.

Children's Offertory at the Altar

We discussed whether we should implement this during mass. Doing this would highlight the gifts of the children of the parish. This could be a distraction during mass. The logistics of this may be an issue. Would we put the money in the safe or put it in a basket on the altar? In lieu of collecting money we could organize a special offertory and collect used toys and/or stuffed animals. This could take place during religious education classes instead of mass. We could coordinate this with "Lenten Day of Sharing." Wendy will talk to Laci about it. The stewardship commission could visit religious education classes to discuss stewardship during this event.

Parish Tithe

We decided to give our parish tithe to Genesis House in Genoa for the month of February. Let's put together a list of agencies to give our tithe to each quarter. Ideas mentioned included: sponsoring a NET ministry team member, We Care pregnancy center and Sts. Peter and Paul Parish in Rockford (this parish has a large Hispanic population). In March we will send our parish tithe to St. Patrick's in Rockford. St. Patrick's is having trouble meeting their monthly expenses. In April we may consider donating to Genoa Township. The township offers some assistance to those in need. We'll want to communicate a description of the need of the particular charity.

St. Mary's in Aurora

We discussed activities we could share with the parishioners at St. Mary's. Maybe the children here can make valentines for the children in Aurora. Do we have any ideas for lent? Is there anything we could do for the parish for lent? Maybe we could provide plastic rosaries. Think of ideas that would include the Hispanic parishioners in any activities.

Increasing the Offertory

We discussed what motivates the giving of treasure to the parish (as was discussed in Chapter Two above). Father asked for suggestions on how he could improve his homilies. Should he include stories? Should he preach at the ambo or move around? Suggestions included having the children come up front during the homily or having Father sit in a chair in front of the altar (like a fireside chat). If we focus on preaching and pastoral visits the offertory and mass attendance will increase.

Lenten Education Series

Every Thursday during lent we will have mass at 5:30 p.m. and host a soup dinner with a speaker on life topics. A different committee/commission will host the event every week. The stewardship commission will host the event on March 19th. We'll serve the soup and donate bread, drinks and desserts.

Father closed the meeting with a prayer.

The next meeting is February 17, 2009.

Submitted by
Beth Gehringer, Secretary