

William Sweeney, a communicant at Saint Barnabas Parish in Portsmouth, cannot help but notice a different feeling in the air at his parish. What is it? It is an "attitude of gratitude. It has not been long since the stewardship seed was planted within this parish community, but in just a short period of time, the number of parish ministries has increased to forty. Parishioners at Mass are now welcomed by greeters, child care services have evolved, a Senior's Group is active, a Help the Hungry Group has been formed, and a new website has been designed. Bill states, "These are just a sampling of the growing ministries that are being built upon the strong foundation that already existed at Saint Barnabas Parish." He adds, "We were already a stewardship parish, we just didn't know it."



Parishioners at Saint Barnabas Parish in Portsmouth participate in their first annual parish Ministry Fair, a festive celebration of their community of faith.

"A Christian Steward receives God's gifts gratefully, cherishes and tends them in a responsible and accountable manner, shares them in justice and love with others, and returns them with increase to the Lord."

Excerpt from: Stewardship
A Disciple's Response
A Pastoral Letter on Stewardship

PRAYER FOR STEWARDSHIP

Lord God, you alone are the source of every good gift, of the vast array of our universe, and the mystery of each human life. We praise you and we thank you for your great power and your tender, faithful love.

Everything we are and everything we have is your gift, and after having created us, you have given us into the keeping of your son, Jesus Christ.

Fill our minds with His truth and our hearts with His love, that in His spirit we may be bonded together in a community of faith, a parish family, a caring people.

In the name and spirit of Jesus, we commit ourselves to be good stewards of the gifts entrusted to us, to share in our time, our talent and our material gifts as an outward sign of the treasure we hold in Jesus.

Amen.



TIME · TALENT · TREASURE

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STEWARDSHIP



CALLED TO BE DISCIPLES

No matter how you attempt to evaluate its effectiveness, stewardship is basically an attitude and a spirit that is very difficult to measure. However, please read the following testimonies of parishioners who tell how the practice of Christian stewardship has changed their lives and the character of their parish communities.

Betsy Sullivan likens the spirit of stewardship at Saint Joseph Parish in Newport as being “joyfully infectious.” There is a sense of belonging and ownership that has taken hold and stewards are now stepping forward for the collective good of the parish. “We have seen many individuals, both long-term stewards and the newly energized, commit to enhance our parish life.” Betsy adds, “We now look with hopeful enthusiasm toward the future knowing that through our personal and communal love for God, we can combine our efforts and build upon this positive foundation of stewardship for generations to come.”



On the front page of the bulletin for Saint Mary Parish in Newport, it proclaims, “We are a Stewardship Parish.” Active parishioners, Robert and Paula Florentino state that this constant reminder is always producing results. The financial support of the parish has increased, and in addition, the Stewardship Committee has created a program that shares its treasure with needy groups outside the parish boundaries. For Bob and Paula, Saint Mary Parish offers so many opportunities to practice good stewardship. The couple agrees, “Every day we see people coming and going from the parish office, working for the good of our parish family. Every person brings different gifts and talents, and as we each do our part, we know that together we are, as Saint Paul says, ‘Christ’s body’, caring for His Church. This is the heart of stewardship in action.”



Parishioners gather and discuss various volunteer opportunities in which to serve at a Ministry Fair held at Saint William Parish in Warwick.

William Menard has been a parishioner at Saint William Parish in Warwick since April of 1992. An active member of the parish’s Stewardship Committee, Bill believes that “Spirituality is caught, not taught.” He states that once a person recognizes how much they have, “They begin to realize how unlimited their sharing can be.” He reports that since his parish embarked on their stewardship journey of faith, the average parishioner is now involved within more than one ministry. Bill delivered a stewardship lay witness presentation to his fellow parishioners and recounted how stewardship has taught him how to live his life as a disciple of Jesus Christ. Bill states, “Our commitment to stewardship has become so important that it is publicly reaffirmed by each parishioner at the conclusion of every weekend Mass. Now there is a bond that has united Saint William Parish into a vibrant parish family.”



Jane Allen serves as co-chairperson of the Stewardship Committee at Saint Bernard Parish in Wickford. In planning an outdoor Ministry Fair held on the parish’s annual Stewardship Weekend, she recruits lay witnesses to speak at all Masses, telling how they have been blessed and why they share their gifts of time, talent, and treasure. She states that, “Stewardship awareness at Saint Bernard Parish has enticed

young and old, new and life-long parishioners, to look at their lives in a different way. Once referred to as volunteers, active and faith-filled parishioners are now called stewards, joining the ranks of those giving thanks for all God’s blessings.” Witnessing the impact that stewardship has made on her parish community, Jane is confident that Saint Bernard Parish is well on their way to embracing stewardship as “A way of life.”



Under a tent on a beautiful fall Sunday morning, a grateful steward at Saint Bernard Parish in Wickford learns how she can become involved within a new parish ministry.

A parishioner at Saint John Vianney Parish in Cumberland since 1989, Lou Krue states that parishioners have become more involved in parish ministries and in sharing their time, talent, and treasure both within the parish community and beyond. Parishioners more fully understand that everything we have is a gift from God and sharing of ourselves is a way to express thanks to God for all our many blessings. His wife, Loraine, states, “Already an active, vibrant parish, there is an ongoing effort to include a variety of ministries to serve the members of the parish and beyond – with the addition of such projects as continuing adult education through discussion groups, youth involvement in Saint Vincent de Paul, a community garden for the poor, and other programs to involve more parishioners in the stewardship of the Body of Christ that is Saint John Vianney Parish.”