



ST. JOSEPH PARISH

LIVING AS DISCIPLES OF JESUS

STEWARDSHIP NEWSLETTER | JANUARY 2012

GROWTH IN STEWARDSHIP LED BY NEW INITIATIVES IN 2011

Now that we have rejoiced in the celebration of Christ's birth, may we be abundantly blessed in this New Year with greater opportunities to receive, manifest and radiate His love in our parish community and beyond. As we prepare to begin our annual stewardship renewal next month, it seemed an appropriate time to reflect upon the many ways in which St. Joseph Parish was blessed in 2011.

This past year, our parish family has faithfully continued to spread the Good News through the ministries and programs that embody our Catholic identity. Our programs and events brought longtime church members, returning Catholics, and new converts closer to God, encouraged spiritual growth, and support to families in need.

There were new and enhanced pastoral initiatives introduced in 2011 that helped foster the spirit of fellowship in and around St. Joseph Parish. The "Welcoming Ministry" was expanded to reach out more effectively and in a timely and welcoming manner to the newest members of our faith community, making available informational packets that detail the scope of the parish ministerial opportunities. Together with "new parishioner" dinners, and the efforts of our "greeters" we have created a means for these new parishioners to feel warmly welcomed in a parish setting that will enable them to live out their faith more fully through sacrifice and service.

We are extremely pleased with another pastoral initiative that has been

enthusiastically embraced and extremely well attended. "That Man is You" was established as a means for the men of St. Joseph to grow in their faith. Convening very early on Friday mornings in Resurrection Hall, more than 100 attendees meet weekly over breakfast to discuss issues of spirituality that are relevant to them in their daily lives.

Stewardship is thriving at our parish school with many giving opportunities for the children. We hired a new Youth Minister and the number of children participating in our Youth Ministry programs has tripled. Our high school programs are strong with an emphasis on both stewardship and leadership.

The Parish Ministry Fair was a huge success this past fall. Each parish organization was displayed beautifully with information for all those interested in joining. It was truly inspiring to see how hard everyone in this parish works to help one another.

In our ongoing and fervent commitment to advance the teaching mission of the Church, we have remained ever vigilant in building up the resources of the St. Joseph School Endowment. It is the single most important tool available to ensure that our school will remain vibrant and relevant to its purpose, that each student receive the Catholic education they deserve; excellent and affordable.

We are blessed that so many of our parishioners increased their donations in 2011 to make up for the shortfall due to the loss of almost 70 students with the

opening of St. Michael School this past fall. This proves that our community is strong in our commitment to perpetuate the Catholic faith through education. In closing, thank you for all you do to make St. Joseph Parish one of the most vibrant faith communities in the Diocese of Lincoln. Let us continue our work together to make 2012 an even better year!

PASTOR'S PERSPECTIVE



Happy New Year to all of our wonderful Stewards! 2012 is going to be such a great year with

many opportunities to strengthen our faith. We will begin the year with the "Enthronement of the Sacred Heart of Jesus" on January 30th, during Catholic Schools Week. This devotion restores the family to Christ putting Our Lord and His interest first. In return, He will Bless and sanctify those families who enthrone Him as King. In February we will have another Light of the World Retreat led by Teresa Raun. I encourage all of you to attend and deepen your relationship with Jesus Christ through the power of the Holy Spirit. I am also pleased to announce that during Lent, Father Peter Casey from Ireland will be returning to St. Joseph for the Lenten Parish Mission. We are so blessed to have him coming again! Of course our men's group, "That Man is You" will reconvene this month and all men of our parish are invited to jump in at any time. Finally, look out for our new and improved Directory of Organizations during Lent, which will also include an updated telephone directory of all our parishioners. Keeping in touch and reaching out to others is how we share God's love.

FEATURED STEWARD: JOAN LIESCHESKI



Phillip and Joan Liescheski

BY JILL O'DONNELL

The Society of Saint Vincent de Paul, of which Joan Liescheski has long been a member, sprang from a question posed to its founder, French professor and Catholic apologist Frederic Ozanam. According to AmericanCatholic.org, Ozanam was asked, "what do you do besides talk to prove the faith you claim is in you?" His answer was to create in 1833 what is now the worldwide Society of Saint Vincent de Paul, dedicated to serving the poor.

Joan Liescheski answers this same question every day through her actions, many of

them through her work at the local Society of Saint Vincent de Paul. She has been a member for 14 years, volunteering at the Outreach Center and conducting home visits in response to requests for help with food, clothing, furniture, rent, utility bills, and gasoline.

Born and raised on a farm and ranch near Sidney, Montana, Joan has always been drawn to helping others. She earned bachelor's and master's degrees in social work and worked at a pro-life counseling center and Catholic adoption agency in Austin, Texas before eventually settling in Lincoln with her husband, Phillip, and their children.

In addition to her work with the poor, she prays outside the abortion clinic every week with Lincoln Right to Life, sings in the family choir at the 11:00 AM Sunday Mass, volunteers in the St. Joseph School lunchroom, and participates in the Wednesday morning women's bible study group. She also serves on the St. Joseph's Grief Ministry Committee. She and her husband lost their 17-year-old son, John, in 2008 due to previously undiagnosed heart problems. Joan now helps others during their most trying times.

Serving others, with a steadfast serenity, is her way of living. She is an example of how

much one can grow through service. One of the Society of Saint Vincent de Paul's core goals is the spiritual growth of its members. They strive to show the face of Christ to the poor and see the face of Christ in those they serve.

What does it mean to see the face of Christ in the poor?

"I've come to understand that a little bit better," Joan said. "I didn't really know many destitute families before. Now, I can see the holy family in the families that we serve. The reality of the poorness of the holy family—I can relate to that more now."

She cites Pope John Paul II's preferential option for the poor and Frederic Ozanam's call to us to see the poor not just as equals, but as superiors because they have endured trials that we have not.

"Poverty is just oppressive," Joan said. "The poor are invisible to most people."

And yet, they are not so different from us, she says.

"They just don't have the backup systems we have, like our families," she said.

During her numerous home visits to Lincoln's poor, she is often struck by "their incredible depth of simple faith and tenacity to overcome obstacles that are just incredible."

They also respond to prayer. "So often, when we can't help them materially, we pray with them. They're often very grateful for that."

When the work becomes challenging, she knows what to do.

"Ask for God's grace to do what you're supposed to do in the way you're supposed to be doing it," she said. "The more you practice it, the easier it gets."

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HOLIDAY FAIR: A RECORD BREAKING YEAR!

A group achievement is a sign of God's greatness.

On November 6, 2011, the St. Joseph School gym was transformed from a state of the art facility into a festive holiday extravaganza. The new bleachers, that were purchased with last years Holiday Fair proceeds, were pushed back to make room for the event.

The room was bustling with excitement as people were casing the aisles looking at all the beautifully decorated baskets, all donated by parishioners. People were streaming in from the cafeteria, with a satisfied look on their face, after enjoying a delicious breakfast of ham, cheese & egg casserole, hash browns and fruit or a fried chicken lunch! The children were smiling as they played games, ate cookies and visited with friends. It was truly a memorable event!

Of course, a lot of hard work goes into creating this atmosphere and organizing the set up. Steve and Patty Henrichsen have been the "Fair Coordinators" for six years. With great humility and hard work, they have done a fantastic job for which we are all grateful. Patty said, "It's a lot of work each year, but definitely worth it." In her words, "We love watching the whole parish community come together and enjoy one another."

Stewardship is truly exemplified by all those who work so tirelessly to pull off this incredible event. Sharon Jacobson, Stephanie Diers Grossman and Deb Kuhlman head up the silent auction, which always nets the highest amount bringing in \$40,070.28 this year. Mrs. Jacobson surpassed all expectations by collecting another \$16,670.00 in cash donations. Thanks to our parishioners, raffle tickets, which was chaired by Leslie and Aaron Frank, netted \$13,530.00.

Although it all came together in the end, there were a few stressful days leading up to the fair according to Sharon Jacobson. In February,



Silent Auction

Sharon had contacted Ray Hernandez, owner of Beatrice Ford requesting a car donation. Ray eagerly agreed, just like the previous year. In Sharon's delightful way, she inquired about the car as the event was nearing. Ray assured her it was forthcoming.

One week prior to the event, there was no car in sight. The days of the week ticked by and we waited patiently. Finally, on Friday the car arrived! Whew! Thanks to Ray Hernandez's generosity and Sharon's patience the car was a hit.

According to Patty Henrichsen, "There are numerous people who work long hours on the Fair. For example, Tom and Stephanie Diers Grossman and their team worked long hours Thursday through Sunday until all the items are paid for and distributed." "We are so appreciative of their dedication to the Holiday Fair for the past six years and cannot thank them enough!" Patty stated.

Almost everyone in the parish contributes in some way by donating, organizing, attending

or simply praying for the success of the fair. The advertising, games, food, baskets, finances, posters, set up and raffle all require tireless effort. There are so many people to thank, so please know we appreciate every single person's efforts.

The Holiday Fair this year brought in \$87,114.86. After deducting expenses, our net profit was a record breaking \$75,072.49. Part of the profits will go towards the new playground equipment.

The baton has been passed to Tom & Ann Wackel to spearhead the Holiday Fair next year. Steve & Patty Henrichsen said they have sincerely enjoyed their six year run, but in Patty's words, "New fair coordinators bring fresh ideas and will continue the Fair tradition next year." They think the Wackels will do a fabulous job organizing the event. In light of the fact that we had a record breaking year, we all need to continue our efforts and keep up the momentum. The fair is truly a group effort, and clearly an example of stewardship in the highest regard.

Quarterly Report: Oct. - Dec. 2011

PARISH FAMILY

22 new households
1514 total households
3825 total parishioners

SACRAMENTAL REPORT

17 Baptisms
4 Marriages
7 Deaths

OFFERTORY

Weekly/Holy Day Offertory
received: \$778,206.46

Year-to-date (July - Dec.)
Weekly/Holy Day Offertory
received: \$1,286,031.56

Memorials: \$2,780.00 received

CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT LOAN
\$171,757.59 balance remaining

SCHOOL ENDOWMENT

Balance: \$754,346.79
Gifts Received: \$33,837.73

DONATIONS/BEQUESTS
\$36,579.77

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SPOTLIGHT ON ST JOSEPH SCHOOL: ALMSGIVING

BY AMANDA WEEDEE

A new year ahead brings many changes to our lives. We set new goals and excitedly encounter a fresh start. Unfortunately, there is one statistic that remains unchanged. One in four children do not have access to enough food, and more than 50 million Americans live in “food insecure” households, according to Feeding America, a U.S. hunger relief organization.

Knowing the immense need in our community, the students at St. Joseph School have been hard at work to help those in need. The students along with the help of Sister Marie Jacqueline (Spiritual Coordinator at St. Joseph School) ran two food drives and a sock drive.

The first food drive was held from September 27th-29th and brought in about thirty boxes of food, which was donated to St. Vincent De Paul. The second food drive held the first week of November, surpassed all

expectations and brought in over 50 boxes of food for Catholic Social Services.

The sock drive was held December 5th-17th. The goal was to collect 1000 pairs of socks to donate to Matt Talbot. “Stewardship is at the heart of our school and parish and the children are eager to help others,” according to Sister Marie Jacqueline. She added, “By giving, we become thankful people!”

At the same time, student council has been hard at work. This past Christmas, they put on a fundraiser called, “Cash for Christmas.” The theme was appropriately titled, *Toy Story*. Each class had a competition to raise the most money. With the collected funds, student council representatives went to the store and purchased toys. The fundraiser was a huge success!

The student’s stewardship and willingness to make a change in our community, reminds us of the importance of having a giving spirit all year long. Let us all learn from the student’s example and exhibit an attitude of true stewardship in this New Year.



Eighth Grade Student Council Representatives