

Pastor's page: The Annual Pastor's Stewardship Report on St. Kilian Parish Life (2014-2015)

"Each one has received a gift, use it to serve one another as good stewards of God's varied grace." (1 Peter 4. And)

The Spirituality of Stewardship is our way of life as Christians. A steward is a manager or caretaker of the estate of the Master. He has been entrusted with caring for and cultivating the lands and the people while the Master is away. As Catholic Christians, we use the term 'Stewardship' to describe what we do after we say "yes" to Jesus Christ as disciples. We have been given the task of building the kingdom of God through the transforming and purifying power of the Holy Spirit. We are deeply grateful for God's love that we first received with our baptism. Out of love for the Lord and one another we use our time and energy, our financial resources, and our whole being in enthusiastic service as good stewards. The Lord is our first and greatest love!

This St. Kilian Annual Report makes clear that our cultivation of the vineyard of Christ in Farmingdale, has been bearing fruit in abundance. We have nearly 5500 families registered in our parish. Hundreds of you have taken up the mantle of discipleship given to you by Christ. You are participating actively in the work of the gospel. Your ministries are in liturgy, faith formation, parish social service ministry and outreach to the poor, in the spirituality of stewardship, in organizing fund raising and community events, in pastoral planning and development of our potential as a faith community, and in support groups of various kinds.

The center of our Catholic faith and parish life is the Eucharist and weekly liturgies. 150 Eucharistic ministers assist at weekend and weekday masses; and many of them bring the Eucharist weekly to Daleview nursing home and homebound parishioners. 33 lectors proclaim God's word at our parish masses. An average of 2300 parishioners gather to worship in our church each weekend, and more than 80 celebrate daily mass. Our Music Ministry added to the Adult Choir with 30 music ministers now leading our assembly in the praise of God and under the leadership of our choirmaster Paul Phinney. We have six leaders of song as well. There are 50 altar servers both boys and girls, and 50 ushers/greeters. Eucharistic Adoration (with Father Duffy's guidance) has scores of parishioners praying before the Blessed Sacrament daily in our St. Benedict Chapel.

Nearly 200 baptisms were celebrated and a similar number of children received first reconciliation and first Eucharist and confirmation. At three anointing services during mass this past year, an estimated 600 parishioners received the Sacrament of healing in the Anointing of the Sick. Our pre-Cana Ministry prepared 22 couples for the sacrament of Marriage, and 32 other couples received their pre-Cana instruction elsewhere; making a total of 55 weddings celebrated in our parish church by the clergy of the parish. In the

handing on of our Catholic faith to young and old, (formerly under the leadership of Sr. Mary Jane Kelly) each week 84 catechists have been teaching 1200 of our parish children this past year, preparing them for the sacraments of reconciliation, Eucharist and confirmation. 40 of these children have special needs and 10 have disabilities. Our catechists have been extraordinary in their dedication and their love for these children. Parish Social Ministry, directed by Nina Petersen, has 50 volunteers serving the poor, providing food and assistance to many hundreds of needy families throughout the year - most with little children. A new ministry called 'Friendly Visitors' was begun and has 15 parishioners involved. Last Thanksgiving 2014, 500 needy families were served, and at Christmas 800 Christmas gifts were distributed. Hats, gloves, and scarves were donated as well.

The Spirituality of Stewardship has been taking hold in our lives increasingly during the year, with a revival of the St. Kilian Stewardship Committee. Last year's focus on the caretaking and managing of our financial resources in giving God our first fruits, resulted in a 5% increase in our parish offertory collection. The financial report of our parish is included in this bulletin, and will be on our website for your study and prayer. Our parish Business Manager, Frank Shanley, in collaboration with the oversight and guidance of our Finance Committee, has done an excellent job in responsible use of your donations. The 2014-2015 Financial Report shows that we are both transparent in our fiscal management and accountable to you.

At the Ministry Fair 2015, this past June, with its focus on donating our time and talent to building up the kingdom of God, most parishioners signed on for another year of service, and nearly 100 new ministers emerged to join in various parish works of education, liturgy, social service, and administration.

A Social Media Committee was begun under the leadership of father Michael Duffy. Our parish website has a new and vibrant look. www.StKilian.com Be sure to use this website regularly. It contains the parish bulletin, full calendar of parish events, important links to our diocese and Bishop, the US bishops, the Vatican, and much more.

A Spirituality Committee has also come into existence, and has been charged with developing our holiness as a faith community through retreats, missions, days of recollection, and more.

There are hundreds of thousands of Spanish-speaking Catholics living in our diocese, out of the 1.5 million total number of Catholics. St. Kilian's has been designated, by our Bishop, as a welcoming parish for Hispanic Catholics. Because of this, the Bishop has assigned to St. Kilian a Spanish speaking priest and a recent immigrant from El Salvador, Father José Luis Tenas. We are delighted to welcome him and support his efforts in meeting the spiritual needs of the Spanish community. Mass in Spanish is celebrated on

Saturday nights, and the Hispanic community prays together each Wednesday in our school cafeteria. Father José Luis prepares new parents for the baptism of their child and baptizes in our church monthly in Spanish.

After nearly a year of workshops and meetings, both locally and on a deanery level, the Pastoral Council (Steering Committee) has composed a Mission Statement published in our bulletin; and on our website.

“The Catholic family of St. Kilian parish seeks to be a vibrant, welcoming community of faith, guided by the Holy Spirit, nourished by God’s word and the Eucharist, and committed to witnessing God in and through our neighbors.”

On the weekend of November 21-22, 2015 and in place of the homily, all parishioners will complete a Parish Survey. This 100 question survey has been professionally developed in concert with the St. Kilian Steering Committee, by the Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate (CARA). The results will be compiled and returned to us with important information on our parish community. With this information parish leadership will have their finger on the pulse of our parish; and be able to plan our future more effectively. A representative from CARA will meet with St. Kilian leadership, both clergy and lay, and present the results of the survey and assist us in the development of an action plan.

God’s holy Word in the Scriptures and our celebration of the Eucharist are central to us. As a Spirit led people we offer warm welcome and hospitality to all who worship and minister with us, and we reach out with compassionate care to people who may feel wounded and marginalized.

The Steering Committee is near completion in their creation of a Vision Statement that will help us focus our priorities and resources over the next five years. This statement will include improving our Eucharistic celebrations, lifelong Faith formation, spiritual renewals and prayer opportunities, and more. What do we aspire to do better as a faith community? How will we accomplish this vision?

This Stewardship Report is a striking witness to your love for Jesus Christ and the Catholic Church. In every aspect of our life as a faith community we are maturing and deepening our love for God and our neighbor. We are filled with joy and gladness in serving the Lord. How blessed we are to know and love Jesus!

Thank you for putting your life in the service of Jesus Christ and his people. May God’s peace and joy be always in your hearts! You are in my prayers always; and I know I can count on both your prayers and your continued ministry. I am blessed to be your pastor.

Peace,

Father Bruce J. Powers

