

Pastor's page: The Annual Stewardship Report on St. Kilian Parish Life (2015-2016)

“Now to Him who is able to accomplish far more than all we ask or imagine, by the power at work within us, to Him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever. Amen. (Paul to the Ephesians 3. 20-21)

The Spirit of God has indeed been working powerfully among us during this past Jubilee Year of Mercy. Praise be to God! I am most grateful for your response to God's love in the many ministries of St. Kilian parish. You are truly beloved disciples of the Lord!

The Spirituality of Stewardship, based on the 1992 pastoral letter of the US bishops: *Stewardship: a Disciple's Response*, has rejuvenated Catholic dioceses and the parishes within them, around the country. The pastoral in its entirety is available on the US Bishops website: USCCB.org

In last year's Stewardship Annual Report on St. Kilian Parish Life, I noted that the St. Kilian Steering Committee had composed the Mission Statement that has been prominently displayed in our bulletin and on our website (stkilian.com) during the past year. The St. Kilian Vision Statement with “Five Pillars of Parish Life”, soon followed the Mission Statement. The Pillars are: Hospitality, the Eucharist and Liturgy, Lifelong Faith Formation, Stewardship, and Parish Social Ministry. Laminated holy cards of the Mission and Vision Statements were distributed after Mass, to be placed in your prayer book, or perhaps on your dining room table. Since the end of the summer, I have dedicated my pastor's page to the Action Plan that will put the Five Pillars of Parish Life into specific goals and objectives for the coming years. If you missed these Bulletin pages, you can find them on our website.

Pope Francis has spoken repeatedly about encountering our Lord in prayer. Stewardship is the response we make to that life-changing encounter with Jesus. He calls us by name to come and follow him as his disciples. Everything we do after we say ‘yes’ to Jesus, is stewardship!

This St. Kilian Annual Report is a striking testimony to the power of the Spirit at work among us who believe. In every dimension of parish life we are proclaiming the kingdom of God until the Lord returns.

The center of our Catholic faith, the “*summit and source*”, is the Eucharist and our weekly liturgies. Our weekend masses average over 2000; with Christmas and Easter holy days doubling and tripling that number. We have a total of 150 Eucharistic ministers. Some of them bring the Body and Blood of Christ to homebound parishioners and nursing home patients. Most of them distribute the

Blessed Sacrament at weekend and weekday masses. Forty lectors proclaim the word of God at the Eucharist. Music ministers, the 11 AM mass adult choir, and the 9:30 AM mass choir lead us in praise of the Lord. Fifty altar servers assist with our worship, along with fifty ushers/greeters. At the St. Benedict Chapel nearly 100 parishioners pray before the Blessed Sacrament daily.

Baptism, First Reconciliation, First Eucharist, and Confirmation- each number around 200 infants and young people annually, in English and Spanish. The Anointing of the Sick, the healing sacrament that brings strength, forgiveness and new life to the ill, was celebrated four times during the past year during Mass, with hundreds receiving the sacrament. Many times the anointing was celebrated with the homebound, and also at Daleview nursing home - praying for their recovery.

In our Faith Formation programs, each week for twenty weeks during the year, 1200 students study the Scriptures and church teachings. They learn to pray as they encounter Christ through the witness of their catechists - nearly 80 of them. This past year our catechists were updated on the teachings of our church. In addition, they received classroom skills. Their catechist formation was led by our Directors of Faith Formation (Claire Stiglic and Kathy Singleton). As the new Faith Formation year began this past September, monthly parent meetings started. It is hoped that young parents will learn to pray, and gain some theological expertise in their understanding of the Eucharist, reconciliation and confirmation - becoming more active in their faith, setting a good example for their children, and worshiping God as a family on Sundays. The 9:30 AM Family Mass in particular, is geared to music that will touch the hearts and minds of younger folks and their parents.

Our Stewardship renewals; time and talent in the spring and fall financial offering with pledges for the year, have brought many newcomers to ministry and support of our parish. If you are new to ministry in the parish, welcome and thank you! Hundreds of veteran parishioners active in ministry commit each spring to another year of service to the gospel. If you have increased your financial support for our many ministries, I am sure the Lord is pleased with your generous contributions. If you can respond more generously - but have not, we are in great need of your support.

Nina Petersen, the Director of our Outreach and Parish Social Ministry, tells me that she was blessed to receive and train twenty-eight new outreach ministers as backups or replacements for our regular volunteer crew. Training was provided not only by Nina, but also by agencies like the Department of Social Services, Catholic Charities and Long Island Cares.

During the past year, St. Kilian Parish Social Ministry met the needs of 8582 people. They received food, basic needs of living like clothing and toiletries, transportation, case management, housing and utility assistance, employment assistance, information and referrals, advocacy with social service, holiday assistance, school supplies and friendly visits. The extent of services offered by this parish to the poor and needy is extensive. Nina would be only too happy to let you know in more detail how St. Kilian parishioners are meeting the challenge of the poor. Your financial offerings, and your involvement as a worker and minister with Parish Social Ministry, help make this possible. Thank you.

Like most parishes throughout the United States and Europe, Church attendance weekly at St. Kilian is less than 15% of the registered 5300 families. To meet this challenge, the Five Pillars of the St. Kilian Vision Statement, and the five-year Action Plan, hopes to return baptized Catholics to full engagement with the work of the gospel at St. Kilian.

Some highlights of our Action Plan: 1- The creation of a *Welcome Wagon Ministry* with home visits to new parishioners and those newly registered; 2 - A new *Hospitality Ministry* for monthly, after Mass refreshments and community building; 3 - A *9:30 AM Family Oriented Mass* with contemporary music to attract young families, especially those enrolled in religious education; and 4 - *Prayer and Retreat opportunities* both on our parish campus and nearby retreat centers.

When I arrived at St. Kilian, in June 2014, I received a packet of information about the parish. Sadly, LaSalle Regional School had closed in June 2012 due to lack of sufficient enrollment and mounting financial costs, especially healthcare and the payment of a just wage for the school faculty. My predecessor, Father Michael Flynn, was broken hearted, but soon made efforts to rent or lease the closed school building during daytime, with our religious education children making use of the facilities after public school hours. I have continued this pursuit of a renter or lessor, to no avail.

Maintaining the building and our other parish buildings is quite costly each year. The school building and the rectory (the former convent) are nearing sixty years old, and in need of extensive repairs. We have only \$652,000 in parish reserves. Like most of the parishes in our diocese with buildings from the 1960s, renovation and modernization of all our parish buildings is badly needed. Roofs, windows, doors and boilers need replacement and preventative maintenance as well. The school building does not allow access for the disabled, and is not ADA compliant; nor is it energy-efficient.

To address all this properly will easily cost 1.5 million dollars. In the meantime, operating costs, over which we have no control, continue to rise. Benefits for employees increase annually. The total school subsidy tax, to support Catholic schools in our diocese, is now \$130,524 for St. Kilian parish. (12% of total income; a tax levied on all parishes in the diocese).

The Pastoral Council has been made aware of our situation, and their counsel has been sought. With the advice of the parish Finance Committee, this past year we engaged the services of a commercial broker to facilitate the rental or lease of the closed school building. In addition, the diocese of Rockville Centre has authorized all parishes with rising financial needs and decaying infrastructure, to consider the sale of parish property, contingent on the approval of the diocese. With the involvement of our commercial broker (Colliers), and at the behest of Bishop Brennan and diocesan officials, I am developing a Pastoral Plan for the future use of our parish buildings and property. The commercial broker and I have been meeting with Bishop Brennan and the heads of our diocesan offices on the needs of St. Kilian parish and the use of our parish buildings for the proclamation of the gospel. We are considering all possibilities.

In the meantime, your continued financial support of our parish is crucial. We can make the necessary repairs to our buildings only with your generosity. During the past fiscal year, our total regular collections were nearly flat; down .1% from the previous year. The Backwards Raffle, bequests and fundraising enabled us to stay in the black. As good stewards of all God's blessings given to you, your involvement in parish ministries and your sharing of money, support the mission of St. Kilian church. Stewardship is not minimum giving. It is maximum giving.

You serve the Lord with gladness in the many ministries of this faith community. You also offer praise to God with your weekly offering in the collection. In every dimension of parish life, the Catholic faith that we treasure is handed on and proclaimed.

Thank you for all that you do in the name of Jesus Christ. In the power of the Holy Spirit we will meet the challenges of the future. To Him be the glory and honor, forever and ever. Amen!

Peace,

Father Bruce Powers, Pastor

