



Saint Kilian Stewardship Report on Parish Life (2017-2018)

Charles Dickens begins “A Tale of Two Cities” with the famous sentence: *“It was the best of times, it was the worst of times, it was the age of wisdom, it was the age of foolishness....”*

For our parish family, the past year has been the best of times. The report that follows is positive and uplifting. I have not attempted to include all the wonderful works of this outstanding parish. I have simply highlighted them.

For the church around the world, battered by the latest revelations of clerical sexual abuse, it has been the worst of times. I continue to be deeply saddened and angered that some priests have abused their position and preyed upon children. That some bishops have been complicit in covering up their crimes and transferring predator priests to parish after parish, has been even more dismaying. I continue to pray with you for the purification of our church, and for the development of necessary changes in how church decisions are made.

Each year I publish a Stewardship Report on Parish Life. This report reflects the power of the Holy Spirit at work within the lives of the people of Saint Kilian’s parish. In 2021, we will celebrate 125 years of living and proclaiming the good news of Jesus Christ.

***“Without a Vision, the people perish.”* A modern Catholic parish needs a vision; and the annual development of goals and objectives to keep us on course as a faith community. Three years ago the parish Steering Committee (consisting of Pastoral Council members primarily), with the assistance of the diocese, developed our Saint Kilian Mission Statement; and the Five Pillars of the Saint Kilian Vision Statement. This mission/vision statement is a word picture that tries to capture our hopes and dreams for the next five years.**

This September 2018, the Pastoral Team spent the day together in prayer. In light of our vision/mission statement, we evaluated the past year’s parish ministry activities, and set goals for 2018-2019. The Vision Statement five pillars are Hospitality, Eucharist and Liturgy, Lifelong Faith Formation, Stewardship, and parish social ministry. Working collaboratively with parish lay and ordained

ministers, each team member has a leadership responsibility for one of these pillars; and the responsibility to accomplish set goals and objectives.

A large 21st-century Catholic parish like Saint Kilian (5300 registered families) needs strategic planning in order to keep focused on the power and presence of God, and grow in holiness. Each year we evaluate our Spirit-led progress. We have completed two years of our six-year planning cycle. The pillars are published weekly in our bulletin, and on our website. Four years from now, we will need to develop a new five-year plan.

Hundreds of you, responding generously to the Vatican Council call to lay ministry, have helped our five pillars come to fruition during the past years. The Spirit of God has been working powerfully among us! Thank you for your active involvement in the work of the gospel. *“Baptism makes us members of the body of Christ: “Therefore... We are members one of another.” Baptism incorporates us into the church. From the baptismal font is born the one people of God of the New Covenant, which transcends all the natural or human limits of nations, cultures, races, and sexes: “For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body.” (Catechism of the Catholic Church 1267)*

Pillar I - Hospitality. We have been working steadily to increase opportunities for hospitality and welcome at our parish liturgies and events. 1. We have had parish festivities to express our gratitude to God and to encourage our getting to know one another better as we share in the mission of the church. 2. We have been trying to warmly welcome one another as we enter and exit the church. We have tried to reach out and welcome new parishioners. Our ushers have endeavored to be Ministers of Hospitality as well as receivers of the Offertory collection. 3. All parish ministers have tried to be conscious of creating an atmosphere that is invitational and joyful at weekend mass, as well as parish hospitality and parish festivities. 4. Hospitality has been offered after mass on a regular basis with warm invitations to join in celebration and community building. 5. A Social Events committee has not yet been established, and remains as a goal for the coming year, but numerous parishioners have worked hard on parish social events. The Saint Kilian feast day Barbecue, the St. Patrick’s Day dinner dance, the Backwards Raffle and annual Parish Ministry Appreciation Party have contributed to the building up of our faith community.

We have continued and expanded our Baptism Ministry. Baptism preparation includes an initial interview with those seeking to have the child baptized; a baptism class, and the celebration of the sacrament of baptism itself. In addition, we have invited the families who have had a child baptized in the past month, to a Sunday mass. At that mass, the families have been recognized by the assembly and blessed, and given a crucifix to hang on the wall in their home.

One of our unrealized goals is the establishment of a *Welcome Wagon Ministry*. This ministry, to be developed, will have the responsibility of personally welcoming new parish families, and arranging a home visit. This Friendly Visit will present some material on our parish that will include the parish ministry booklet and opportunities for involvement in our faith community. If you are interested in participating in a Welcome Wagon Ministry please contact our Director of Stewardship, Jane Zollo, and let her know of your interest.

Pillar 2. Eucharist and liturgy. *“We seek to nourish the faith life of the parish by celebrating meaningful liturgies, and offering opportunities for a wide range of prayerful experiences.”*

This past year, those responsible for leadership in liturgy, members of our Saint Kilian Liturgy Committee, have tried to accomplish the three goals created last year. 1. Increase the number of ministers and liturgical ministries; 2. Provide more opportunities for ongoing development as a parish minister; 3. Provide new experiences of various forms of prayer.

Last year, we had retreats in Advent and Lent; daily adoration of the Blessed Sacrament in Saint Benedict Chapel for contemplative prayer on weekday afternoons and evenings, celebration of mass daily at 7 AM and 9 AM, and more intensive opportunities for prayer in Lent and Holy Week 2018.

Pillar 3. Lifelong Faith formation. *“We are dedicated to inspiring the young and the old through lifelong education and formation of minds and hearts.”*

We have more than 80 lay catechists handing on the faith to the young in our parish. Because of these catechists and the leadership of the Directors of Faith Formation, 1200 children are learning about Jesus Christ and the church throughout the year. The Faith Formation Office has conducted 60 parent meetings this past year, to teach the parents (800 parish families) of these

children about the faith, and help them grow in holiness as a family through prayer and study. This model of lifelong Faith formation calls everyone who participates into a conversion process. Together we are growing in our knowledge and love of Jesus Christ. The numerous meetings with parents have been very productive. There has been little resistance in spite of parents having to change priorities in order to attend the Adult Education meetings. The parents are hungering for Christian spirituality in their very busy lives; and they are eager to receive it.

The Faith Formation Program is family centered. The 9:30 AM Sunday mass is oriented toward families. The music is contemporary with guitars and other instruments. On a regular basis, the children of the Faith Formation Program and their parents come to the mass as a family and actively participate.

Pillar 4. The Spirituality of Stewardship. Stewardship has been defined as everything we do after we say 'yes' to Jesus Christ. What return, we ask ourselves, shall I give to the Lord for all that he has given to me?

This is the Spirituality of Stewardship. We want to be wise and prudent servants of Jesus. We want to be worthy disciples. We want to demonstrate our love for the master in the appropriate use of all that has been entrusted to us in this life, until we return to God. We are deeply grateful for what we have received, and eager to cultivate our God-given gifts. We use them for the glory of God, and the benefit of our neighbor whom we try to love as we love ourselves.

Two goals emerged from our brainstorming on the fourth pillar. A Stewardship Ministry Fair was held in the spring 2018 to celebrate our call to service. Stewardship Witness Talks were given in the fall 2017 and spring 2018 bearing witness to what the Spirit is doing in the lives of some of our parishioners. Their presentations inspired veterans to continue their service, and newcomers to join us. We were challenged to ask ourselves: How well am I using my God-given gifts - my time, my talent, and my financial resources, in giving praise to God and building up the body of Christ?

Growing in the love of Christ is a lifetime task. We are constantly turning our lives over to the Lord in an ever deepening way. If you are presently involved in ministry, thank you for all you do for the Lord. If you are hesitating, or not yet involved, please step forward and let the Lord use you as his instrument.

Pillar 5. Parish Social Ministry. “We bring our faith to life by serving others through compassionate personal outreach, and commitment to social justice.”

Parish Social Ministry (PSM) serves those who are in various social conditions of need. Some folks are disabled. Others are going through a temporary hardship, and others may be senior citizens in need of food, clothing and shelter. PSM advocates on their behalf, and provides for their needs because of the generosity of our parishioners. Our Food Pantry assists hundreds of families each month. Our Parish Social Ministry Director trains parish ministers and oversees their efforts to assist clients. She works closely with PSM Core Ministry Volunteers and coordinates her efforts with other nonprofit professionals from nearby social service agencies.

Our Director of Parish Social Ministry (PSM) is in the process of forming a Social Justice Committee, addressing a wide range of social justice issues including poverty on Long Island, affordable housing, the opioid epidemic, immigration and immigration policy, women in society, the death penalty, racial equality, abortion, euthanasia, and much more. You may be interested in becoming a member of the social justice committee.

This past year, the Pastoral Team and Pastoral Council invited “*Yes Counseling*” to give a workshop on opioid addiction during this time of what appears to be an ever-increasing number of overdoses. Nearly 100 Farmingdale residents attended the workshop in our Auditorium. What can we do as a faith community to overcome drug addiction that is presently taking the lives of young people?

“Project Closet”, providing donated clothing to clients, has moved its location from our parish school building to the renovated basement of the rectory, due to our building rental by *Journey* school.

I am most grateful for your ministry involvement. Our collaborative effort to proclaim the good news of Jesus in the Farmingdale area is growing through the power of God. Each one of our Pastoral Team members (listed in the bulletin), joins me in gratitude for your faithful response.

Some Exciting New Developments - 2018-2019 - Growing in the Love of Christ.

Journey School - As I reported to you in last year's Annual Stewardship Report on Parish Life, we successfully rented our school building with a lease that allows the full use of our building, after school hours, for parish activities of all kinds. Journey School began its school year this September 2018, and Saint Kilian parish became a landlord for this new tenant!

Our Parish Campus - with multiple aging buildings, our Parish campus is in great need of renovation and modernization. Some repairs need to be accomplished as quickly as possible. For example, the rectory roof has been leaking for years, and may not be able to last another winter. Immediate action is needed and reserves are limited.

With the advice and collaboration of the Finance Committee, and the full involvement of the diocese of Rockville Centre building office, Bishop Brennan, and the heads of departments, we have engaged the services of a Capital Campaign Company, Parish Development Consultants, Inc. to help us raise funds needed for repair and modernization.

All parishioners were invited to meet Andy White, President and/or Joe Cascio, Executive Vice President, after Mass this past month, or in personal meetings. I addressed parishioners at all the weekend masses about the parish Feasibility Study that has begun. The Feasibility Study wants to determine the level of your interest in Saint Kilian's future. We need to consolidate our resources and our parish campus so that we can have a firm fiscal and administrative foundation for the years that lie ahead. Only with handicapped accessible facilities, and easy entrance and exit to our parish buildings by people of all ages, can we effectively serve Jesus Christ. Only with buildings that are sound and energy efficient, can we meet the future well. Only with necessary funds in reserve, can we deal with emergencies.

Spiritual Renewal. With the collaboration and interest of parish leadership, we have engaged Renew International, (the creators of Renew and Renew 2000), to lead us in a new three year spiritual renewal named 'Arise'. You will have an opportunity to become part of a small Christian community, praying with Scripture, and sharing your friendship with Jesus. The Arise groups will meet in the homes of parishioners who offer their hospitality. Each year there will be a fall and spring session of six weeks. Renew International will offer training for

those parishioners who will lead small groups in their homes. You will be hearing more about this exciting spiritual development in the months to come. I hope and pray that hundreds of Saint Kilian's parishioners will participate.

125th Anniversary. We will be celebrating our 125th anniversary as a parish three years from now, 2021. We need your assistance in helping us plan and implement parish events for this special year of grace! Let the Director of Parish Stewardship, Jane Zollo, or Father Suglia know of your interest. Would you be willing to be part of a **125th Anniversary Committee?**

“Now to Him who is able to accomplish far more than all we can 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’s letter to the Ephesians 4:20-21)

This Stewardship Report, like those in past years, is a testimony to the grace of God at work among us. You remain in my prayers each day as I give thanks for you, your love for the church in these trying times, and your faith in Jesus Christ.

Peace, Father Bruce