



Dear Family,

Now that we are getting back to normal and the COVID protocols are melting away, I wanted to address the stewardship survey which our parish conducted one and a half years ago. This was a comprehensive look at the beautiful effort which all of you make day in and day out to support Blessed Sacrament. This is my first time to bring up the survey, but it will not be my last. I waited the past 11 months until the situation with COVID changed for the better.

I first want to thank you for taking the time to express your thoughts. I have read this report twice and appreciate all that you have written. In some areas there is a consensus of thought, and in other areas, a great diversity of opinion.

Here is my take on what Stewardship is: We are called by God to share our gifts with others.

This means we willingly sacrifice or give up our time, our talents, and our treasure to build up the kingdom of God. Prayer and the inspirations of the Holy Spirit are what make the soul eager to make this kind of commitment. **Stewardship is then something very spiritual and close to the heart.**

Here are some things to start off with:

1. **Liturgy There were 95 suggestions about the Mass.** On three small things there was consensus. So we now (1) announce Mass intentions, (2) ring bells at the consecration, and (3) pray the St. Michael prayer at the end of the Sunday Masses.

(a) Greeters There were 48 suggestions to be more welcoming. We are starting a Greeter Ministry. This would involve arriving to Mass early and greeting people at the door while handing them a bulletin or worship aid. We need five for each Mass. When people arrive here they should be greeted with a smile. So far two people have signed up.

(b) Lectors and Ushers Please come to the brief but important meeting **Wednesday June 2 at 7:00pm in the church undercroft.** The Lectors will be doing the announcements before Mass instead of the Music Director. The Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion during Mass will no longer have to walk to the vestibules where the bronze doors are. Those bringing Holy Communion to others after the Mass need to receive the host(s) from the priest or deacon in the same way.

2. **Our Church Building There were 63 suggestions for buildings and Facilities.**

(a) Cleaners We need help cleaning the church on a monthly basis. Bill Dehlinger started this up on his own initiative and I am very grateful. It is a big building which receives a lot of traffic.

(b) Better Restrooms More than one person suggested updating the restrooms in the vestibule. I think this is a good idea. I would be grateful for help in picking out some tile and wall paper.

(c) Handicapped parking near the elevator I will bring up this suggestion with the parish council.

3. **Music There were 95 suggestions for Music.** There is absolutely no consensus about music in the parish right now. The suggestions are all over the place with some people wanting things to be more contemporary while others wanting it to be more traditional.

I am rebuilding the music program at Blessed Sacrament. There will be more cantors. Our choir just had their first practice in over 14 months. Please consider joining. We plan on getting the children's choir up and running when school opens in the Fall. We also want to bring back the hand bell choir and involve other instruments besides the organ and piano.

I would ask that when you make suggestions about music, that you do so in a charitable way. Please be patient. During the days of COVID things were very restrictive. We were even told that we had to discourage congregational singing. That is why the worship aids were only partially helpful. They had the readings, but the music settings in them were unfamiliar to people by design because of the protocols. They will be more user friendly from now on. We are also looking at buying hymnals or missalettes sometime over the summer.

4. **Clergy and Homilies There were 58 suggestions in this category.** These remarks were directed personally to Msgr. Vogelpohl and Fr. Clift who have both gone on to minister elsewhere.

These are just some of the things which were suggested by the survey which we can explore now. The next step is to call a meeting of the stewardship committee in June. They last met in person 15 months ago in February of 2020. While they have met virtually since then, their work of implementing this survey was stopped by COVID.

Lastly, please feel free to come to our parish council meetings if there is anything which you think needs discussing. Our next meeting is June 8th at 7:00pm in the undercroft.

From Fr. Damian Hils, Pastor

