

Parish Stewardship Update

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Shared Gifts! Working in Your Parish Community

Saints Peter & Paul Parish in Rockford is a parish community bridging the gap between Spanish-speaking and English-speaking parishioners through the shared gifts of the people.

When a number of parishioners recognized the problem of dangerous steps and sidewalks leading to the church and rectory, they took on the task of replacing the concrete. With the help of a prayer group member who works in the construction field, and other parishioners volunteering their labor, the steps and sidewalk were repaired and replaced without cost to the church. While this may seem like a small task, it is a major undertaking for Saints Peter & Paul. This parish is one of the poorest in the Rockford Diocese.

Once the steps and sidewalk were replaced, there was a parishioner who could not get into the church one Sunday during Mass because of the space limitations. The parish council and the prayer group leaders met to discuss a possible layout change to the church in order to facilitate more seating. In the process of pulling out a couple of pews and finding the linoleum floor cracked and stained, they decided to pull up some of the linoleum and found a hardwood floor. The excitement was turned to disappointment when they found out there was no way to remove the linoleum without causing other damage to the hardwood. At that point, someone who grew up in the parish and was grateful to be able to give something back to the church offered a very generous donation of a beautiful cherry wood floor.

The beautiful new floor caused the 75 year-old oak pews to show their age. Another local company offered to strip and finish the old pews. The company lent the

parish a truck and groups of volunteers hauled each pew down the two flights of stairs and onto the truck to be delivered. After the pews were stripped, the volunteers went back and sanded each of the pews before it was refinished. Once refinished, each pew was hauled back to the church by volunteers and reattached to the new floor. All of this work was accomplished over a number of weeks and there were 30 to 40 volunteers each day to provide the service to the parish.

In one section of the church, the metal folding chairs are being replaced one-by-one with upholstered church chairs with attached kneelers. This is due to the newer Spanish-speaking prayer group and the established English-speaking parishioners asking individuals to donate a chair to make their parish community a church home.



Father Tim Piasecki, Pastor at SS. Peter & Paul, said:

“The real benefit of all the work that has been accomplished is that there are many people new to Rockford and the United States who are making SS. Peter and Paul parish the community in which they gather to worship and gather to

support one another. They are taking on a sense of ownership and embracing the role of true stewards of this parish community.”

There are many other positive events happening at Saints Peter & Paul parish and each of them bears witness to a community whose shared gifts are an example of living as stewards of God's Church.

Good Stewardship ...

In The Spirit Of Giving...

Can we give our children a head start on stewardship issues? I believe we can by teaching them some basics regarding the use of time, talent, and treasure. I sometimes need help to look more carefully at my children's use of their time. While the TV is

always an option to let the kids become settled in one spot, the following facts make me think more about its use.

- The average child (ages 2 to 17) watches nearly 20 hours of TV per week. By comparison, parents spend an average 38 minutes per week in meaningful conversation with their children.
- 56% of kids age 8 – 16 have a TV in their bedroom.
- There is only a 1 in 12 chance that parents will require their children to do homework before watching TV.
- Children view on average 20,000 commercials per year.
- By age 18, the average American child will witness 200,000 acts of violence on TV and will have spent more time watching TV than in the classroom.

Are we being good stewards of our time? What example are we offering our children? Let's teach our children about our Faith. Let's model for them the positive impact of prayer, individually and as a family. If turning off the TV seems like a sacrifice, let's use the opportunity to teach about sacrificing for the good of the community in which we live.



2003

International Catholic Stewardship Conference



**Mark Your
Calendar!**

From October 5th through 8th

In Chicago

How do you live your call?

The Christian faithful are obliged to assist with the needs of the Church so that the Church has what is necessary for divine worship, for apostolic works and works of charity and for the decent sustenance of ministers. They are also obliged to ... assist the poor from their own resources.

*The Code of Canon Law
Canon 222*