

"IT IS RIGHT TO GIVE HIM THANKS AND PRAISE" Diocesan Stewardship 2002

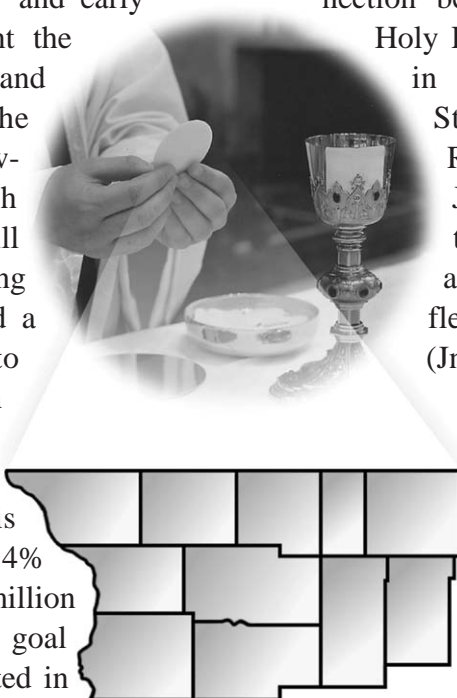
By David J. Hougan
Director of Office of Stewardship Development

After being incorporated into the United in Faith Endowment Campaign for one year only, Diocesan Stewardship 2002 returns to the parishes. Announcement Weekend is scheduled for April 27/28, 2002 and Pledge Weekend will be May 4/5, 2002. During the month of May and early June, parishes will present the Appeal to their members and will solicit pledges. The Diocese will conduct follow-up activities in July through mid-September. These will include a follow-up mailing to all non-respondents and a phone follow-up phase to those non-respondents with a past giving history. The goal for Diocesan Stewardship 2002 is \$5,727,888, which is a 4% increase over the \$5.5 million Diocesan Stewardship 2001 goal that was a part of the United in Faith Campaign. Each campaign year, parishes are encouraged to achieve at least 110% of their parish goal and to set a participation goal of at least 40% of their members making a pledge. For Diocesan Stewardship 2000, 32,080 people, 35.8% of all diocesan members, pledged \$5,892,162, which is 112.9% of the goal.

"It is Right to Give Him Thanks and Praise" is the theme for this year's Appeal. It is the response of the congregation at every Mass when the priest prays, "Let us give thanks to the Lord, our God." The Stewardship Commission of the Diocese wishes to point out that a Christian steward is primarily

motivated to give of self, of time, talent and treasure out of thanks and praise of God for what He has given us in our lives and in imitation of Jesus Christ.

This theme also emphasizes the strong connection between stewardship and the Holy Eucharist. The U.S. Bishops in their Pastoral Letter, *Stewardship: A Disciples Response* state: "We have Jesus' word, 'Whoever eats this bread will live forever, and the bread that I give is my flesh for the life of the world.' (Jn 6:51) The glory and boast of Christian stewards lie in mirroring, however poorly, the stewardship of Jesus Christ, who gave and still gives all He has and is, in order to be faithful to God's will and carry through to completion His redemptive stewardship of human beings and their world." †



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This Issue

Anatomy of a Successful Wills Seminar	2
St John the Baptist, Johnsburg - United in Faith Campaign Bloc 3 Experience	3
St Joseph Parish, Elgin, Hosts Stewardship Parish Mission	4

Sharing is published periodically for the Diocese of Rockford by the Office of Stewardship Development

ANATOMY OF A SUCCESSFUL WILLS SEMINAR

ST. PETER, SPRING GROVE

By John Sentovich
Director of Planned Giving

They were secretly praying for a cloudy, overcast day when they scheduled the Wills Seminar months before. But when Saturday, November 10, 2001, turned out sunny and beautiful, the stewardship committee of St. Peter Parish in Spring Grove had its doubts whether many of the 60 people coming to the seminar would actually show.

When fifty-eight actually came, one person was not a bit surprised – the man who spent hours of time planning and organizing the seminar: Mr. Hank Koukol. Recently retired and drawing upon his experience as a seminar planner in the insurance industry, Hank's role as coordinator of the seminar was a natural fit. As Hank puts it, "What the people in the parish don't know is that I have a background in direct response advertising. Part of my responsibility was to develop a seminar program for insurance agents. I also conducted seminars on prospecting. With my background, it was rather easy to put on the seminar."

As good stewards always do, Hank agreed to share St. Peter's experiences conducting the seminar in the hope of helping other parishes plan theirs.

JS: What process did the parish go through to organize the seminar?

HK: As a member of the stewardship committee, I volunteered to coordinate the seminar. Being retired, I had time to devote to all the planning. At our August meeting, I presented a planning schedule of what had to be done and dates by which certain functions had to be started or completed. This became our "map" and we knew that if we followed it carefully, everything would be done on time. John, I can't emphasize enough how critical this planning is to the success of the seminar.

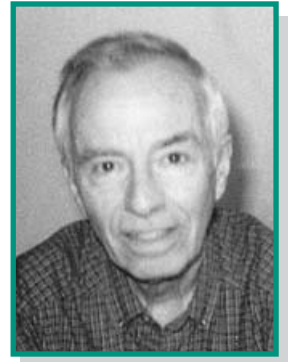
In early September, we had a "teaser" in our bulletin announcing the seminar and asking people to mark November 10 on their calendar, telling them that more details would follow. In late September, we included an 8" by 11" insert in our October parish newsletter that is mailed to all families. The insert gave more details and included a tear-off reservation form. A modified version of this insert was mailed late October in the November newsletter.

On October 21 and 28, we included another insert in our bulletin. During the third week of October, we mailed a personal letter to parishioners over 50. We chose 50 year olds because we assumed they would be the likely target to attend a seminar like this.

The two weekends prior to the seminar, our pastor promoted the seminar during the announcements. A very important final step for us was to call and remind those who said they were coming. I made many calls and found that some forgot to put the date on their calendars or had the wrong time. In my mind, this is why we had only two no-shows.

JS: Why did you choose a Saturday morning to conduct the seminar?

HK: We eliminated workdays because people working are tired and probably would not want to attend a 1 - 2 hour seminar. The older folks probably wouldn't want to drive at night. This left Saturday or Sunday. John, we just thought Saturday was a better choice than Sunday. We began the meeting at 10:00 a.m. and had bagels, cream cheese, cookies, a fruit tray along with coffee and soda as our refreshments.



Mr. Hank Koukol

JS: What did you hope to accomplish with the seminar?

HK: Our hope for the day was to be informative without necessarily solving particular problems. The seminar should help people be more aware of estate planning issues so that they are better prepared when they see their attorney.

I think we succeeded in accomplishing our objective in providing information. The presentations went very well, and I like the fact that we had presenters that were not parishioners. (Retired attorney and former Foundation Board Chair Regina Narusis gave the estate planning talk and John Sentovich spoke on the stewardship of assets.) The presenters had nothing to "sell."

JS: Was the seminar worth the effort? Why or why not?

HK: Yes, the seminar was worth it. It provided the parishioners with valuable information. To my knowledge, we have never done any programs like this that were not based on adult faith catechesis. It shows that St. Peter can provide a wide array of services.

JS: What would you say to other parishes interested in organizing a similar seminar?

HK: Do it! Your parishioners will thank you for it, because it shows that you can provide a valuable service that everyone needs and that has the parishioner's interests in mind.

Author's note: All attendees completed a seminar evaluation that asked for any type of follow-up help. Everyone received a thank you letter from the presenters along with information that pertained to their follow-up needs.

Hank reminded me that one need not be a seminar planner to organize one at the parish. All it takes is a well thought-out plan that is implemented completely. Hank began by reading the Six Steps to Conducting a Wills Seminar at Your Parish or School offered by the Planned Giving Office. This gave him a framework in which to work. Feel free to contact the office for a free copy of the steps.

If you have any specific questions for Hank, his number is (815)675-3221. †

ST JOHN THE BAPTIST, JOHNSBURG UNITED IN FAITH CAMPAIGN BLOC 3 EXPERIENCE

REV. ROBERT BALOG, PASTOR

*By David Hougan, Diocesan Director
Office of Stewardship Development*

There were many examples of whole-hearted involvement by the parish leadership and members during Bloc III of the United in Faith Campaign. One representative parish is St. John the Baptist in Johnsburg.

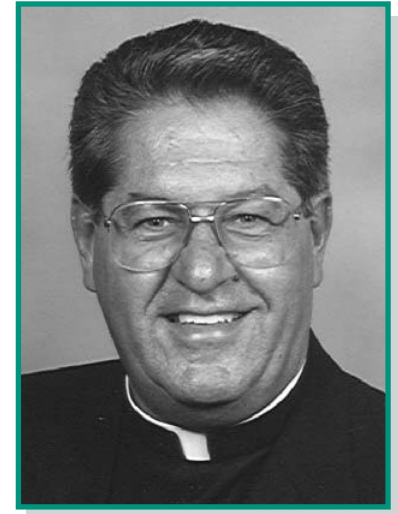
Prior to announcing the United in Faith Campaign to the parishioners of St. John the Baptist, Fr. Bob Balog, the Pastor, met with his Finance Council and gave them the details of the Campaign strategy. He carefully outlined the campaign describing the advantages of raising funds and placing them in the Foundation for the future well-being of the diocese and parish.

A spirited dialogue was generated that included representatives of the Diocese and Campaign consultants. In the past, the parish experienced difficulties with meeting their goal for the annual diocesan appeal. The likelihood of achieving the Campaign goal of \$558,000 was a concern.

After much dialogue and because of the positive leadership from Fr. Balog, the lay leadership became convinced of the benefits of the Campaign. Fr. Bob stressed with his parish leadership that they should look for the future development of the parish and the diocese as a means to offer a church for their children and grandchildren. He used the approach of the first German immigrants who established and built the church in Johnsburg. The parish history of over 160 years of faith within the community demonstrates the value of the Catholic Church presence in Johnsburg. The present church is a testimony of their faith.

With his guidance and direction, a very spirit-filled leadership team prayed and took a realistic approach to the future impact of the United in Faith Campaign. For six months prior to the initial announcement in the parish, a petition was included in the Prayers of the Faithful. The

pulpit announcements, inserts in the bulletin, preaching about the campaign at Masses, the witness of parish members and the power of prayer centered the parish on the goals of the Campaign. Parishioners were invited to a meeting, which included the video presentation of the campaign. There were favorable comments, and of course, a few skeptics.



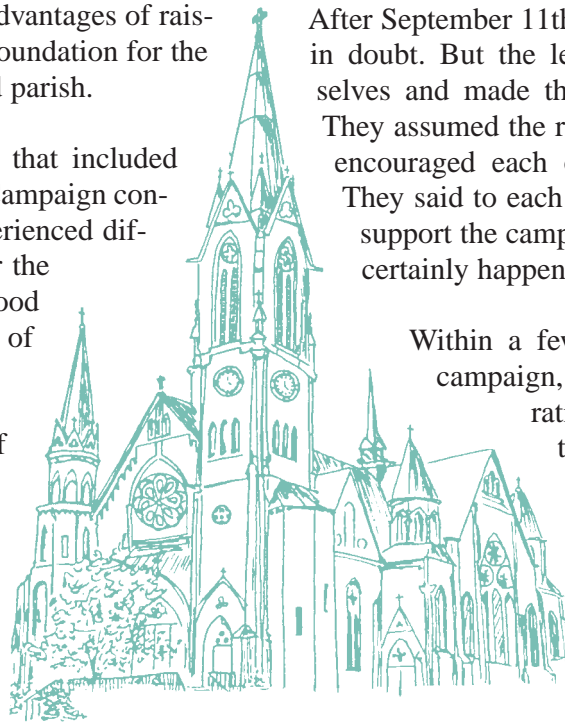
Fr. Bob Balog

After September 11th, the success of the campaign was in doubt. But the leadership team rededicated themselves and made the commitment to see it through. They assumed the responsibility, worked together and encouraged each other to continue to be positive. They said to each other, "If we pray, work hard and support the campaign, good things will happen." It certainly happened!

Within a few weeks of beginning the active campaign, their hard work and careful preparations paid off. Many pledges began to be tallied. Enthusiasm grew among the leadership team as the goal was in sight, but the unthinkable was happening. There was the possibility of going over goal. The Campaign was so well organized that the CCS Director attended only the first two meetings and turned over the last 10 report meetings to the parish leadership team.

In the end, \$711,000 was pledged! 127% of goal! It was a total effort: it began with prayer, included the parish office staff, the Finance Council, the leadership team and the support of the parish members with their prayers and pledges. United in Faith enriched and blessed the lives of all those who have participated in the campaign at St. John the Baptist.

Bravo to St. John the Baptist and to all the Bloc III parishes! ✚



ST JOSEPH PARISH, ELGIN HOSTS STEWARDSHIP PARISH MISSION

*By Bob Pfundstein
Director of Parish Stewardship*

During the first week of Lent, St Joseph parish in Elgin hosted a major parish stewardship event. In order to reinvigorate their history of stewardship, the pastor, Fr. Dave Huber, decided to have a parish mission. In consultation with the staff, they decided to include multiple sessions for over 1200 children in the school and religious education program. Fr. Dave also wanted to reach the young adult group with the message of stewardship.

The Process

Beginning on Saturday morning, there were presentations made to each of the four religious education classes, divided by age group. The presentations included a simple message of time, talent, and treasure and incorporated the children's participation. The attention of the children was held by projecting multi-colored images on a large screen and making connections between how they live their daily lives and how they model and grow their faith through action.

Each of the seven weekend Masses included a stewardship message and an invitation to attend the parish mission talks. This message was given in English and graciously translated into Spanish at the four Spanish Masses by volunteers from the parish community. The mission talks were given on Sunday late afternoon, Monday evening and Tuesday evening.

In order to offer additional opportunities, each talk was repeated the following morning. Sunday evening included a gathering of the young adults who were treated to a brief stewardship presentation prior to their weekly gathering for faith discussions and fellowship. On Tuesday afternoon the grade school children participated in a stewardship presentation similar to the one given on Saturday. The principal, Ms. Janine Bolchazy, and some of the school teachers also expressed their thanks for the presentation and materials handed out.

The high-school religious education classes were held on Wednesday evening and they participated in a lively presentation in which the stewardship message was geared more to their level.

The message was appreciated and many of the children of the parish were very gracious in their response.

Overall, Fr. Dave was pleased with the efforts and the participation of the parishioners. He felt it was a good beginning to the Lenten season and is looking forward to following up the mission with a fall stewardship appeal for increased parishioner participation in time, talent, and treasure at St. Joseph parish. †