

Stewardship in Action at St. Bernard

The St. Bernard Golf Classic: A Stewardship Story

The Third Annual St. Bernard Golf Classic will be held on May 14 at Fox Hollow Golf Club in Branchburg, N.J. The evolution of this golf outing from a concept to a successful event presents many good examples of stewardship in action at St. Bernard.

Every month, Deacon Gerry Sims emails a personal welcome message to each of our newly registered parishioners. New parishioner, Mike Freschi, chose to respond to the one he received.

In his response, Mike noted that in his old parish, he and his wife, Maria, had organized a parish golf outing which raised several thousand dollars each year. Being a good steward, Mike wanted to help out his new parish in a similar way. He explained that he and Maria could not organize such an outing by themselves, but offered to work with a golf outing committee, if one could be organized.

Deacon Gerry took Mike's offer to our pastor, Msgr. Joe Celano. Msgr. Joe happily agreed to Mike's proposal.

Being a golfer himself, Deacon Gerry began to put the word out among some of our parishioners who he knew were golfers. With the number of good stewards we

have in our parish, a positive response was received from almost everyone who was approached.

Bob Craig, one of the golf committee members, assuredly expressed the sentiments of all of the committee's members when he recently commented on his response to the invitation. He said, "When Deacon Gerry Sims asked me in mid-2010 if I would be interested in being on a St. Bernard golf committee to help raise funds for our parish's many ministries, I was thrilled. It gave me an opportunity to join other men of the parish on the committee, participate in the sport I enjoy so very much and, most importantly, help raise funds for the many ministries provided in our wonderful parish. Our two St. Bernard Golf Classics to date have been very successful and we are encouraged that the 2013 event on May 14 at Fox Hollow will be even better."

Ultimately, the golf committee came to include Mike Freschi, Bernie McElroy, Sal Longo, Ron Haikes, Mike Macchiarola, Leo Delaney, Joe Huchko, Bob Craig and Deacon Gerry Sims. Mark LaFleur, a parishioner and our parish cemetery director, has also recently joined the committee.

The golf committee hit pay dirt when Joe Huchko agreed to be a member. Joe has been a faithful member of the Stewardship Council for several years. More importantly, he has his own company, Teamwork Enterprises, which plans, organizes and manages golf outings and other corporate events. Over the past two and a half years, Joe has given invaluable advice to the committee on how best to plan our outing and use it to raise funds.

As a result of **all** of the committee members' gifts of their time and talents, the first two St. Bernard Golf Classics were, in fact, quite successful. More than 100 golfers attended each of those events. Moreover, there was a net profit for the parish of more than \$12,000 the first year and over \$17,000 the second year. The committee hopes to top those numbers again this year.





Stewardship

A way of living

In addition to the committee's efforts, the golf outing has been made more successful by the efforts of other good stewards from our parish. For example, Woodbridge Printing Center is owned by parishioners Frank and Anna Racz. Free of charge, they have printed the brochures and raffle tickets for each of our three golf outings.

Similarly, parishioner Greg Bielat has donated a titanium sponsorship each year on behalf of himself and his company, UBS. Additionally, several of our parishioners have approached their employers and persuaded them to provide significant financial sponsorship to the golf outing. One parishioner convinced his employer, The Provident Bank, to be a platinum sponsor for the past three years. Another parishioner has obtained a titanium sponsorship each year from his employer, Toyota.

The contributions of our parish staff should also be noted. Mark LaFleur, Director of the St. Bernard Cemetery, Brian Curtis, our Finance and Business Manager, and Bill Chmielewski, our Maintenance Supervisor, have each obtained a number of sponsors for the outing. Of course, our pastor, Msgr. Joe, has also pitched in, obtaining several important sponsors.

Recently, when asked to comment on the St. Bernard Golf Classic, Msgr. Joe stated, "The golf outing was proposed to me three years ago as a way to help raise additional income for the parish during these hard economic times. Not only

has it done that, bringing in almost \$30,000, but it has also become a "community event," a way for our parishioners and their friends to enjoy a relaxing day on the course and a good luncheon in the club house, while helping bring needed revenue into the parish. The annual parish golf outing has become an event I look forward to every year, not just as a fund-raiser, but as a "fun-raiser" for our community. Why not join us this year?"

Please do consider attending this year's golf outing. Golfers of every skill level, whether alone or in a foursome, are welcome. Further information can be obtained in the bulletin and on the parish website.

The success of the St. Bernard Golf Classic has been the cooperative effort of many good stewards from our parish. Together they present a great example of "Stewardship in Action at St. Bernard."



Interested in learning more about the Stewardship Council?

Please contact Mark Dransfield (mlrek@optonline.net or call 908-526-6649)