



Stewardship in Action at St. Bernard



WELCOME BACK!

Parishioners:

It's hard to believe the summer has ended! The Stewardship Council hopes that you enjoyed the summer and spent some relaxing time with your family and friends.

Many ministries take a hiatus in the summer time and are now gearing up for a new year of ministry activities. It is the ongoing mission of the Stewardship Council to *"Bring people to live a life of Stewardship."* Our objective as a Council is to increase parishioner engagement through **TIME, TALENT** and **TREASURE** activities. September is a great time to begin to prayerfully reflect on how you can get involved in ministry. Over the coming weeks and months, the Stewardship Council will do its part to bring visibility and promote opportunities for you to get involved. See the back of this newsletter for a sample of some upcoming activities.

The Council is excited to serve you.

Yours in Christ,
Mark Dransfield
Chairperson, Stewardship Council

MERLE ANDERSON AWARD WINNER DOTTIE TIETJEN: DECADES OF SERVICE

This past May, the St. Bernard Men's Club gave its annual "Merle Anderson Award" to Dottie Tietjen. The award is given each Spring to a female parishioner in recognition of her sense of stewardship and years of service to the people of St. Bernard parish. A similar award, the "Charlie Grill Award" is given to a male member of the parish each Fall.

Dottie Tietjen joined St. Bernard in 1960 when she and her husband moved to Raritan. They subsequently had two daughters, Kathy and Ellen. Dottie also now has two grandchildren.

Her children led her to her first taste of active ministry, which was to teach Religious Education while her daughter was a student. That would be followed by service in a number of other important ministries through the years.

One such opportunity to serve came in the early 1980's, when the then Pastor, Fr. John Brundage, selected Dottie to be a team member for an important new parish program called RENEW. The purpose of the program was to "renew" the spirit of the parish and its members. Those on the team attended a yearlong series of lectures on RENEW in preparation for bringing it to St. Bernard.

The nature of the program was to form small faith communities that met in people's homes where they discussed scripture and how it applies to our everyday lives. With Dottie's help, the RENEW program, which lasted several years, was a great success and helped to renew and refresh the spirit of St. Bernard parish, putting it on the road to become the great parish that it is today.



Dottie Tietjen (in blue) with previous Merle Anderson award winners (l to r) Cynthia O'Connor, Jane McElroy, Flora Costantini

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STEWARDSHIP COUNCIL ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS ...

SiA (Stewardship in Action) – A monthly insert in the parish bulletin that highlights Stewardship-related news stories, profiles of ministries and individuals and upcoming events sponsored by the Stewardship Council.

Stewardship Sunday – Usually, held on the third Sunday of the month. Following the 10:30am mass, a social (“Donut Sunday”) is held in the parish cafeteria that affords the parish community the opportunity to network, socialize and learn about parish activities.

Service Day – Later this fall, the Stewardship Council will co-host a “Service Day” with the Youth Ministry. The day will focus on grounds-keeping right here on the parish grounds. The day is sure to be filled with camaraderie and fun! More details soon to come

Stewardship Tree – As in years past, the Stewardship Tree will be positioned in the church narthex during the Advent and Lenten seasons. Leaves hang from the tree denoting service opportunities. This is a great opportunity to get involved in a ministry's work with only a small time commitment.



MERLE ANDERSON AWARD WINNER (CONTINUED)

With the great talent Dottie had shown with the RENEW program, it was only logical that Fr. Brundage would approach Dottie about another big undertaking the parish was planning to enter. That was the Rite of Christian Initiation for Adults (RCIA) program which is designed to teach non-Catholics about the faith and prepare them for entry into the Church.

The RCIA began at St. Bernard in 1986. Dottie was one of the two original members of the RCIA Team and twenty seven years later, Dottie is still an active and valued member of the team. The RCIA team is guided by Deacon Patrick Cline and his wife, Vivian. When asked about Dottie's contribution to the team, Deacon Pat commented, “Dottie has walked the journey with all of our converts over the years and she has been both a support and example to all of them. I am grateful for all that Dottie Tietjen has done for St. Bernard.” Currently, there are two adults in formation, who will join the many that Dottie has helped mentor as they prepare to join the Catholic faith.

When asked why she has remained on the RCIA team for so many years, Dottie says that it is because she “learns so much from those seeking conversion” that “I feel renewed in my own faith.” She says, “It's like seeing through a child's eyes. Everything is new and fresh for them. It's amazing to see their enthusiasm and how they are enlivened by learning about the faith.”

In addition to RENEW and RCIA, Dottie has been involved in many other ministries through the years. She served on the Parish Council for three years and was also a member of the Building Committee which helped design and raise funds for the construction of the present St. Bernard church, completed in 1989.

Dottie was also one of St. Bernard's original Eucharistic Ministers, and continues in that ministry, serving at Mass and visiting Rehab at Rivers Edge (formerly Raritan Extended Care) one day each month for a communion service for the residents. She also cooks dinner for our IHN guests when they are staying at St. Bernard.

Dottie also answers the call to stewardship through prayer and practice. She attends daily Mass, has attended various retreats, including Cursillo and the Beloved retreat. She was also a member of the parish Charismatic Prayer Group for many years and, when time allowed, she prayed with the parish Women's Prayer Group. In every way, Dottie Tietjen is a great example of Stewardship in Action here at St. Bernard.

I have known Dottie since I first arrived in St. Bernard over 14 years ago. It is not my place to tell you all she's done for the parish over the years. But I can tell you why she does it. Dottie loves the Lord and loves the Church. That is evident in everything she does. She has been and continues to be a steward of the gift of faith through her participation in daily Mass and her desire to know and live her faith more deeply and joyfully.

"When we speak of 'stewardship', we tend to think of it using the ideas of volunteerism and generosity. While being "active" and "supportive" demonstrate how seriously we take God's call to be good stewards, these things, by themselves, are not Christian stewardship. Christian stewardship begins with the humble recognition that all that I am and all that I have comes from God. God gifts us, not for our own sake alone, but for service to and for others.

Perhaps this is how Dottie best inspires us; by reminding us that the first gift entrusted to us - the gift above all we must steward well - is the gift of faith."

Monsignor Joseph Celano

Interested in learning more about the Stewardship Council?

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