

Stewardship in Action at St. Bernard



STEWARDSHIP FOCUS: EUCHARISTIC MINISTERS

While all of St. Bernard's ministry volunteers are amazing, some are truly "extraordinary." These are the Extraordinary Ministers of the Eucharist who serve at Mass and bring Holy Communion to the sick and the home bound.

Father Jay, who trains Eucharistic Ministers for our parish, recognizes the gift that these volunteer ministers bring to the parish; they respond to a critical need within the diocese - the shortage of Priests. With nearly 600,000 Catholics in the Diocese, and no new priests (who along with Bishops, deacons, and acolytes are the "Ordinary Ministers" of the Eucharist) being ordained this

year, this ministry will continue to be an important one." So while we celebrate our EM's, as Father Jay reminds us, it is also important to remember that "the necessity for 'extraordinary ministers' is a sign for the laity to pray for more vocations."

Eucharistic Ministers follow in the footsteps of the 3rd Century martyr, St. Tarcisus, a twelve year old boy who gave his life bringing the Eucharist to condemned Christians during the Roman persecutions. It is estimated that Tarcisus was a youth during one of the fierce Roman persecutions of the third century. One day, he was entrusted with the task of bringing the Eucharist to condemned

Christians in prison. He preferred death at the hands of a mob rather than hand over to them the Blessed Sacrament, which he was carrying.

St. Bernard's team of 85 Eucharistic ministers serve their brothers and sisters at St. Bernard. In addition, they bring Holy Communion to the sick, homebound and to those in local nursing homes and senior care facilities such as Centerbridge and Avalon.

In turn, they receive what Father Jay calls "a greater realization of the True Presence of Jesus in the Eucharist."



WHY I SERVE . . .

Here are what some ministry members have to say about their own experiences serving as part of Eucharistic Ministry team at St. Bernard:

Vince Riello

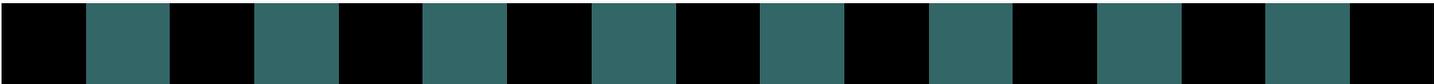
"I have been an EM for over 30 years and I still enjoy it just as much as I did years ago. It is such a privilege serving the people of God. I

remember when my pastor asked me to be a Eucharistic Minister, I felt that I wasn't worthy enough to be one, but I realized that if wanted to wait till I was perfect that it would never happen! The Holy Spirit inspired me to say yes."

When I originally visited the home bound, I thought I was doing them a favor, but you know what? I'm the one that gets fulfilled, seeing the faith that people have."

Mike Macchiarola

"I decided to become a Eucharistic Minister because my involvement in Mass helped my understanding of the structure and traditions of Mass. That greater understanding along with serving my family, friends, and fellow parishioners brings me spiritually closer to Jesus Christ."



MORE WHY I SERVE . . .

Heather Lynch

"My husband Sean and I have served as EM's since right before the birth of our first child in 2007. We had joined St Bernard's around the same time and found this to be an opportunity to serve the church and further our faith. We continue this calling to show our children how important it is to be of part of the church. We also feel that being participants in Mass in the role of EM helps them to learn the value in serving others, as well as the importance of God in our lives. For these reasons, we find this ministry so important. Although it can be challenging with two young ones (you may often see us at 7:30 mass!), we continue to participate because we feel this ministry has become such a significant and meaningful part of our life."

Laura Hennessey

"I became an EM because I was looking for a service opportunity within our parish. Since I regularly attend Mass, I thought becoming an EM was the perfect opportunity and what better way to serve the Lord then to administer Jesus to fellow parishioners. It brings me great joy to be handing fellow believers the Gift of eternal salvation."

Anita Bruno

"I serve because in my opinion, there is nothing greater then to be able to serve my Lord, with all my heart, mind & soul. I felt it was a calling from God. It's fulfilling because it makes me think of the day Mary went to visit Elizabeth, and when John the Baptist heard

Mary's voice he leaped with joy in Elizabeth's womb. That's how it makes me feel. My heart is so joyful."

Dana Lauducci

"I serve as a Eucharistic Minister to further my involvement in our church community, to provide service to the parish and be more involved in the liturgy. Cynthia O'Connor approached me to ask if I was interested. I had been an active Eucharistic Minister in college and as a young adult and I was pleased to get back involved. I enjoy being a more active participant in the liturgy and to be a small part of other Catholics' Mass experience too."

Mary Beth Tarantino

"My mom served as an EM for years. It brought her great joy. Honestly, I struggled with the idea of being "worthy enough" to give Eucharist to others. In time, I realized that none of us are truly "worthy" but ALL of us ARE WELCOMED to join in the FEAST. I have been an EM for about 3 years. I am truly humbled when I look at a Plate of Consecrated Hosts knowing that The Body of Christ is the same for everyone who comes forward. When I look into the Chalice of Precious Blood, knowing that one tiny drop could Heal the World, or heal all the souls living, dead, and yet to be born, I am in AWE of the Magnitude of the Sacrifice of Our Lord Jesus Christ! It often brings tears to my eyes! I am amazed each time when I serve seeing all the faces who seek to know Jesus in this Special Way, and at all the footsteps of those who travel, sometimes under challenging circumstances, to receive this Precious Sacrament. It is truly a Blessing to Serve the Community of St. Bernard's Parish."



INTERESTED IN BECOMING A EUCHARISTIC MINISTER AT ST. BERNARD?

Registered parishioners who have completed their sacraments are eligible to become Extraordinary Ministers of the Eucharist. After a training session, you too can be an important part of the celebration of the Eucharist. The next training session will be held on May 27th and will be facilitated by Father Jay.

Contact Jane McElroy at 908-526-8949 or janiemcel@optonline.net if you are interested or for more information.

Interested in learning more about the Stewardship Council?

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