

Stewardship in Action at St. Bernard

December 2015



DISCOVERING CHRIST

Over the course of 7 weeks this fall, 90 parishioners and friends of St. Bernard embarked on a spiritual journey as participants in the parish's first *Discovering Christ* program. The program provided a forum for exploring faith, examining core Gospel messages, and inviting participants to draw closer to Jesus Christ.

The program was open to all, regardless of where they were in their personal faith journey. As noted by our pastor, Msgr. Joe Celano, "*Discovering Christ* is meant for everyone; faithful Catholics who want to grow in their faith, Catholics who have fallen out of the practice of their faith and who may be seeking a path to come back, even those who are not Catholic at all who may be looking for faith in an uncertain world."

The weekly sessions of *Discovering Christ* included four components: a meal, prayer time, a video presentation, and small group discussion. Topics explored questions such as "What Is The Meaning of Life?" and "What Does Jesus Want Us To Know?" Each week a short lesson was presented, connecting the Gospel message to the lives of the participants. Toward the end of the sessions, a one day retreat was also held for participants.

The program was well-timed, as we as a Church are beginning the "Year of Mercy," declared by the Holy Father, Pope Francis. According to Msgr. William Benwell, head of our diocesan planning committee for the Extraordinary Jubilee of Mercy, "During this time we are called to remember that God "never tires of throwing open the doors of his heart to us," and that we, in turn, have a responsibility to be "heralds of mercy" to others."

Evidenced by the extraordinary efforts of many program volunteers who came together to be welcoming, supportive, and open to others as they explored their faith, the mission of the *Discovering Christ* program was well aligned with the call to merciful service, which is central to the "Year of Mercy." As explained by Msgr. Celano, the program was intended truly open the doors, "to reach out into our community and beyond it to invite people to come and see what faith is all about."

Upon completion of the Fall *Discovering Christ* workshops, parish staff, program volunteers, and participants were all excited by the energy and spirit generated by the program. We look forward to continuing to enrich our faith community by running additional programs in the future.



Many Thanks to *Discovering Christ* Volunteer Teams

- Intercessory Prayer
- Evangelization
- Hospitality
- Dinner
- Small Group Facilitators/Helpers
- Babysitting
- Worship
- Retreat
- Core Team
- Administrative

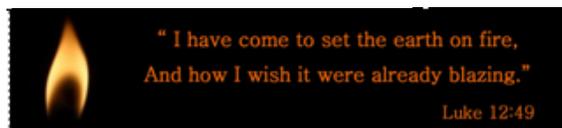
A follow up to the *Discovering Christ* program, entitled *Following Christ*, will be offered this January, and the *Discovering Christ* series will be offered again in the Fall of 2016. For more info, contact: 908-725-0552 or office@stbernardbridgewater.org

REFLECTIONS ON PARTICIPATING IN *DISCOVERING CHRIST*

Upon completion of the program, participants had this to say:

What did you like most about Discovering Christ?

- “The community, the interest that so many people have – the hunger for Christ. Personally, it renewed and strengthened my own faith.”
- Kathy Zita
- “Meeting the people in our parish community, feeling supported and welcomed.” - New parishioner, Cindy Coulbourne
- “It’s a great feeling to come to a place where we praise, worship and learn about Christ and be in a more close relationship with Him and our community.” - anonymous
- “How we can deepen and strengthen our relationship with Jesus.” – Dave Blood
- “It made me think . . . a lot! It also made me start to pray more. Make more time in my life for Jesus.” - Kim Yacykewych
- “Being able to share experiences. Making some new friends. The retreat was the turning point for me.” - Rich Ambrose
- “Presentations were great; helped answer many questions. Also, I enjoyed my table friends.” – Cindy Bass



How were you personally or spiritually impacted by Discovering Christ?

- “Opened my eyes to Christ.” - anonymous
- “I am more aware of reaching out to Jesus and the Holy Spirit each day for help and guidance.” – Janice Rippas
- “I feel more encouraged to live a better life.” - anonymous
- “I developed a greater sense of community in my parish.” – Heather Spina
- “Discovering how often I have actually been touched/guided by the Holy Spirit throughout my life.” - anonymous
- “Helped me to strengthen my faith.” -Paulo Verdeflor
- “I am closer to Christ, my faith is deeper and stronger.” – Ruthanne Walsh
- “A great job was done with the program. I truly got so much out of this and would highly recommend the program to others. I learned a great deal about how others work on their relationship with Jesus Christ. I feel closer to Jesus.” - Pat Muessen

NEW BANNERS ADORN ST. BERNARD PARKING LOT

The parking lot at St. Bernard has a fresh new look! Earlier this summer, the “We Are Called” banners arrived, celebrating our call to stewardship. New banners for Advent, Christmas and the Jubilee Year of Mercy were recently added. The banners, provided as a gift from the St. Bernard CYM Basketball ministry, will change seasonally as we move throughout the liturgical year.



Interested in learning more about the Stewardship Council?

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

