

Stewardship in Action at St. Bernard



RUSS NESBITT—THE HEART OF A SERVANT

After twelve years serving on the Stewardship Council, Russell Nesbitt decided it was time to step down. The only reason he did so, however, was because he had been invited to two other areas of charitable service.

First, Bishop Checcio, recognizing that Russ has the heart of a servant, has appointed him to the Board of Trustees of Catholic Charities for the Diocese of Metuchen. In that role, he will have certain fiduciary duties regarding the organization's finances. Additionally, he will help to develop new charitable programs for that agency. The second new area of stewardship for Russ is that he has been invited to join the St. Bernard Pastoral Council. There, he and the other Council members will pray, study

topics relevant to our parish life and advise the Pastor on various issues.

The truth is, Russ Nesbitt has been a good steward, involved in numerous charitable activities, for many years. Indeed, in 2014 he was given the Charlie Grill award by the St. Bernard Men's Club's in recognition of his many years of service to St. Bernard parish and elsewhere. For example, when his daughter, Alison, was in the Girl Scouts, and for many years thereafter, he helped that organization to raise funds. Similarly, he and his wife, Edith, assisted their daughter's Catholic high school, Mount St. Mary's in Watchung, in its fundraising, even after she had graduated and moved on to college.

Russ's first area of service for St. Bernard parish was to be the Chair of its Adult Education

Committee which developed many fine programs for parishioners. Since then, he has also been an active member of the Men's Club and a supporter of the parish annual golf outing. For the past several years, Russ has been in charge of one of the three teams that organizes our monthly Stewardship Sunday festivities (Donut Sunday).

In recent years, Russ became concerned about the problems of the people of Guatemala. He has been a member of the Guatemala Partnership since its inception. In 2010, he traveled to Guatemala with Karen Castellon and Deacon Gerry Sims in order to explore firsthand the problems people there faced and how we, as a parish, might be able to help. Russ' interest in Guatemala also led him to become involved with our Diocesan Catholic Charities Solidarity Team (CCST). That Diocesan team not only oversees the Diocese's activities in Guatemala, but also examines ways to help the poor in our own Diocese as well as in other countries around the globe.

Truly, Russ Nesbitt has the heart of a servant and is great example of what it means to be a good steward of God's gifts. The Stewardship Council wishes its departing member much success in his new endeavors.



Nesbitt greeting children at a school in Guatemala.

Welcome to new Stewardship Council Members!

John Nestor and Stacey Stefanski

Thank you for hearing the Lord's call to serve!



STEWARDSHIP & THANKSGIVING DAY

Thanksgiving Day, in Canada and the United States, is a special North American feast. Although it is not a feast on the Catholic liturgical calendar, many parishes celebrate the Eucharist with the Mass of Thanksgiving. Some will have a basket of fruit and grain, or a cornucopia, adorning the foot of the altar. Thanksgiving Day truly holds a spiritual significance for the Christian steward. It is a day that makes us take notice of the fundamentals of stewardship and the importance of having a grateful heart.

Thanksgiving is a day that gives us an opportunity to show our gratitude, provide hospitality and celebrate with loved ones. For the Christian steward, the holiday is rooted deeply in the biblical belief that the world was created by a loving God as a gift for each of us. From the two creation accounts in the Book of Genesis, we understand that this gift of creation is intended to be received by us in thanksgiving and held in stewardship. As a matter of fact, this principle is one of the starting points for a truly Catholic worldview; that all creation is good and that the response to this gift can only be that of awe and a feeling of such gratitude that we would want to share this gift.

Stewardship in the Catholic tradition affirms that into this creation, God sent Jesus the Christ to live among us and teach us the ways of God, and that our stewardship of the world includes cultivating it and building it into an even better and more grace-filled world; a world that reveals the light of Christ and is returned to his Father with increase.

Stewards strive to embrace a life of gratitude; a life that reminds them of the relative abundance they enjoy. It is an abundance unavailable to most of the earth's inhabitants. Most of us have much more than we really need, and the spirit of gratitude should impel us to share this relative abundance with those who are less fortunate.

As Thanksgiving Day approaches, let us take stock of the many wonderful blessings we enjoy. Let's be sure to take time to thank God in prayer for our abundance; avoid the sin of an ungrateful heart; and consider how we might be even better stewards of the gifts God has entrusted to us.



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WHAT STEWARDSHIP MEANS TO ME

This month, we are introducing a new feature in which we ask various parishioners and ministry leaders at St. Bernard the meaning of stewardship.

“When I think of Stewardship, I think of creating a bridge between me and God. This bridge would provide constant communication between what God wants me to do and what I have done with my time, talent and monies to support God's missions on this Earth. I believe stewardship means giving all you have to give to help your community to grow in a Godly manner, where people can come together and do the right thing to help one another.

Stacey Stefanski

For us, Stewardship is a way to say thank you to God for all of the gifts he has given us, including the gift of our church community at St. Bernard. Working side by side with other parishioners on the Stewardship Council, we have forged great relationships and have grown in our faith.

Liz & Mark Dransfield

Interested in learning more about the Stewardship Council?

Please contact Mark Dransfield (dransfam@gmail.com) or by calling 908-526-6649)