

# ST. VINCENT DE PAUL CATHOLIC PARISH



## An Inside Look at Our Stewardship Council

*Building Relationships Between Parishioners and God*

Some time ago, through meetings and discussions among parishioners, parish groups and leadership, St. Vincent de Paul chose to embrace stewardship and the pursuit of stewardship as a way of life. Everything we have done since then is based upon this stewardship commitment.

Once our parish made the stewardship commitment, one of our first actions was the formation of the Stewardship Council to oversee our stewardship efforts – the Council is still in formation and development.

“Our Stewardship Council has many goals and purposes,” says Bret Burgess, Stewardship Council Chair. “But basically, I believe we are about building relationships among and between our parishioners and God, including all our ministries. In addition, we are charged with improving our current ministries and establishing new ministries.”

The Stewardship Council meets with Fr. Michael Holmberg on a monthly basis.

“We really are just beginning, so our meetings are devoted in large part on what we need to do and what Father wants us to accom-



plish,” Bret says. “The parish has brought on a full-time Stewardship Director in Renée Bader, and she is a wonderful help to us. There are 12 lay people on the Council as it now stands, and they really represent a cross section of parish membership. There are those who are relatively new to the parish and others who have been in the parish for more than 40 years. In my own case, I have been in the parish for seven years.

“When I was approached about being on the Council and chairing it, I said ‘yes’ because I do understand stewardship and how important it is for each of us to be involved,” Bret adds.

Our parish follows models for stewardship as outlined by the United States Council of Catholic

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*“Sharing the Faith Brings Me Such Joy”*

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## Good Stewardship of Our Social Media

**W**hen we are talking about the idea of stewardship and how we care for the tools and gifts we have been given, it is not often that we stop to have a conversation about how we are caring for and using the gift of social media to positively spread Gospel values. However, this is an appropriate topic for us to consider when we are talking about the many young people, as well as adults, who gather online on a frequent basis. Therefore, it is important for us to think about how we are using the amazing gifts of technology.

If you are frequently online – especially on Pinterest – there is a popular acronym that you may have already come across. While it is used in many different contexts, it seems very appropriate to follow as we find ourselves posting statuses and pictures on various social media sites. The acronym is T.H.I.N.K., and it invites us to consider what we are saying and sharing, and whether or not it should be said!

Is what we are posting:

**True?** Are we sharing factual information or a rumor that we heard, and if we think our information is factual, what is our source? Is it trustworthy?

**Helpful?** Is the information we are sharing something that can be useful to another person? We don't need to over-examine all of our content to consider its "educational factor," but is the content we are posting going to help someone

learn about us, learn about a place or an activity, think about the world, reflect on life, engage us in laughter, and so forth?

**Inspirational?** There is certainly no requirement to be a poet or an artist, but social media has become a wonderful outlet for positive self-expression. "Positive" is the key word – are we posting to inspire others about the good in our world, or are we posting to cut someone down or to simply rant?

**Nice?** Have we considered the feelings of others when we include them in a status or post a picture of them? Will they be embarrassed? Are we using social media to humiliate and intimidate others, or are we using it to try to better the world and the lives of others?

**Kind?** What a great tool to compliment, show gratitude, and build the self-esteem of those you care about!

People often speak of social media in a negative way because of the content they see posted. T.H.I.N.K. is a great way for us to remind ourselves that we can be good stewards of our own social media use. Remember that there are many ways to share the Gospel without writing out its words. Gospel living has to do with the positive way we approach this life and bring God's light and love to others – and it couldn't be easier than sharing an uplifting status on Facebook, a Tweet of gratitude to a friend, or a beautiful image of God's inspiring creation on Instagram. What a great way to build the Kingdom of God!



*A Letter From Our Pastor*

# “Here I Am, Lord.”

## *But Are You Really There? Are You Responding to God’s Call?*

Dear Parishioners,

Throughout the Bible we hear people say, “Here I am, Lord,” or something similar. Normally, it is a response to a communication, a call, from God. In the Old Testament Book of Exodus, for example, it states, “God called out to him from the bush: ‘Moses! Moses!’ He answered, ‘Here I am’” (Exodus 3:4). We often speak in the Church about the fact that we have each received a calling from God. We also regularly say that one way to respond to that call is to live a life of stewardship.

Of course, the truth is that many do not hear God’s call because they are either not listening or they do not want to hear it. Of course, that is not how we should feel. I could write about my own call, but right now, I would rather address your call.

This is a time of year when there are calls from those in need all around us. Some of those calling are ministries right here in our parish. Before I address our response, it is important to emphasize that we need to hear the call. To hear something, we have to be listening.

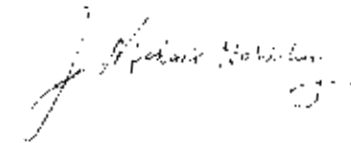
The second issue is our response to the call. Do we indeed say, “Here I am”? Or, do we choose to say and do nothing? Stewardship is a call to action, a call to do something to share with and to help others. In the Old Testament passage cited above, Moses responds, “Who am I?” (Exodus 3:11) – meaning he feels unworthy and unable to fulfill this call from the Lord. God’s answer is everything, as He says to Moses simply, “I will be with you” (Exodus 3:12). Thus,

we receive the call; we are to respond to God making it clear that we are ready. We may quite likely feel (as Moses did) that we are unprepared for what God may be asking us to do, but His response to Moses was the same as His response to us – “I will be with you.”

That is enough to empower us and strengthen us to try to serve God and fulfill His desires for us. Of course, there is one other call to which we need to respond. It is, as Christ said many times, “Come follow Me.”

As we enter this part of our personal year, this part of our calendar year, and this part of our Church year, may we be ready to listen, to respond, and then to do – full with the knowledge that the Lord is with us always!

Sincerely yours in Christ,



Rev. J. Michael Holmberg  
Pastor



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## “We Are Made For Service” *Bob*

“*We are made for service, to care for each other.  
We are made to love, each sister and brother.*”



*Mary and Bob Ellis*

Many years ago, the hymn quoted above – titled “Service” – became a favorite of Mary Ellis’ when she and her husband, Bob, were parishioners at Maria Immacolata Catholic Church in their home state of Louisiana. Maria Immacolata was a parish built around stewardship, so for Mary and Bob, giving of their time, talent, and treasure has long seemed a natural way to live out their Catholic faith. Now in their retirement, the Ellises enjoy filling their free time by helping out here at St. Vincent de Paul whenever and however they can!

While Bob and Mary participate in parish life in many ways, one of the ministries nearest and dearest to their hearts is Music Ministry. Bob first stepped into music ministry as a teenager, playing guitar during a youth Mass at his childhood parish. Some years later, Bob was part of a small rock and roll band and, as young newlyweds, both of the Ellises would often play together with the band in clubs and other venues. When their youngest of two sons was 4 years old, Mary realized that she had more time and flexibility to serve, so she joined the choir as a flutist.

Bob soon followed Mary back into music ministry, and neither has ever looked back!

## *Bob and Mary Ellis Reflect on Stewardship*

“When we moved here and came to St. Vincent 22 years ago, we were already music ministers,” Mary says. “My experiences serving at our previous parish had really planted the roots in me to do stewardship, and that is a big part of what formed my faith. Music ministry has brought the Scripture alive for me, and it has made the Mass more meaningful for me. Praising God – that’s why we’re all here.”

Bob agrees that singing and playing music during the Liturgy enhances his faith life and his desire to continue serving God’s people.

“I was always told that if you sing, you pray twice,” he explains. “Mary and I are also in the Resurrection Choir that plays for all of the funerals, and it really becomes personal then. God gave us these gifts, and this is just a way of returning them back to the Church and to the congregation.”

In addition to being the president of the choir, Bob also serves the parish as an Extraordinary Minister of the Eucharist, a sacristan and a member of the Men’s Club. And Mary certainly spends a great deal of her time here around the parish, as well! She is on the team of volunteers that maintains the gardens on parish grounds, and belongs to the Eucharistic Adoration Ministry, the Rosary Ministry, and the Prayer Chain Ministry.

About 10 years ago, Mary was inspired through one of these ministries to start up yet another service here at St. Vincent – the Bear Collection Ministry.

“As members of the Prayer Chain, we received a request from someone at Cook Children’s Medical Center in Ft. Worth,” Mary recalls. “They have a ministry that gives teddy bears to all of the patients who are admitted. In the summer of 2008, they were concerned they were running out of bears. I thought we could help with this year-round, so I got a ministry started and put the word out, and now we have the St. Vincent’s Bear Collection Ministry.

“It’s not just a toy collection – it involves discipleship,” she continues. “We have the bears blessed before

we bring them, and we pray for the children, as well. This year I had 40 people volunteer to help, so we are expanding as a result of the stewardship program. It’s God at work helping to accomplish our goals.”

Mary views the increased emphasis on stewardship at St. Vincent de Paul to be a great blessing for the faith community.

“It’s a great community, it’s a vibrant community, and it’s being revitalized through stewardship,” she affirms. “We’re all more aware of all the things the community has to offer now.”

Having been a part of a strong stewardship parish in Louisiana for the first half of their marriage, the Ellises are pleased to see service to the Church and God’s people taking the spotlight here at St. Vincent de Paul, and they look forward to continuing to serve in any way they can.

“The Good Lord gave me enough life to keep moving after I retired, and I want to keep it going in a positive way,” Bob says. “Now any time I’m called, I’m Johnny-on-the-spot and I’ll help them do anything I can. I just enjoy it, and I guess that’s the bottom line – when you enjoy something, it’s not a burden to do it.”

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*“It’s a great community, it’s a vibrant community, and it’s being revitalized through stewardship. We’re all more aware of all the things the community has to offer now.”*  
– Mary Ellis

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## The Principles of Catholic Social Teaching

**W**hat makes being Catholic, well, “Catholic”? Things like the Mass, the Rosary and the Seven Sacraments come to mind.

But there is also an element of Church teaching that’s often overlooked and sometimes misunderstood – Catholic Social Teaching.

Catholic Social Teaching guides Catholics on how to apply the faith to all aspects of life, and lays the framework for the Church’s teachings on the dignity and sacredness of human life.

Catholic Social Teaching can be explained with 10 key points. These 10 principles demonstrate the depth of the Church’s teaching on social justice, and they call Catholics to take an active role in shaping the world in which we live. Catholic Social Teaching, when taken to heart, can become the catalyst that causes positive change in a world that desperately needs it. Consider these principles and strive to apply them in your own life.

### **Human Dignity**

Human dignity is the fundamental principle within the Church’s teaching on social justice. A firm understanding of this principle is required so that the rest of Catholic Social Teaching can be viewed from the appropriate perspective. God created us in His image and likeness, so we all are worthy of respect.

### **Respect for Human Life**

Whether unborn or seconds away from death, no life deserves to be prematurely ended. The Church sees this principle as crucial to the health of any society.

### **Association**

Association holds that social relationships must be developed so that all people may reach their fullest potential. The Church teaches that the family is the basic unit upon which all other elements of society rest. We must uphold the sacredness of the family, and foster the growth of other societal organizations that preserve the well-being of all people.

### **Participation**

All people deserve the right to work and to participate in God’s creation. The joy of accomplishing a task and

performing honest labor should be made available to all people.

### **Protection for the Poor and Vulnerable**

Society exists in a balance between those with power, and those without it. The vulnerable – those with disabilities – and the poor must be protected from those with power who choose to wield it in an unjust manner.

### **Solidarity**

“Love your neighbor as yourself” – this commandment extends beyond the boundaries of any town, state or country. The principle of solidarity encourages all people to reach out to their brothers and sisters in need and to help them, even if they live halfway around the world.

### **Stewardship**

Everything we have – even our own lives – is a gift from God. Our talents, our time and our financial resources are not our own, but God’s. The same goes for the natural resources we so often take for granted.

### **Responsibilities and Limits of Government**

Governments, while created for the common good, sometimes overstep their boundaries. The Church teaches that all governments should seek to operate at the lowest level of organization possible – striving to solve problems at the source, with those who understand them best, and not through oppressive force.

### **Human Equality**

God made all humans equal, including those of different ethnicity and race, and in different stages of life. No one person is of more value than another.

### **Common Good**

It is especially important in our society to promote the common good – the social well-being and development of the “human group.” If we consider the entire human race as one family, the common good urges us to support our brothers and sisters so that they may reach their full potential.

# St. Vincent de Paul's Faith Formation Program

*“Sharing the Faith Brings Me Such Joy”*

**T**hough Michal Tincup had been employed as a landscape architect for 20 years, she felt that God was pulling her to work for the Church.

After a few years of volunteering in the kindergarten Faith Formation classes and teaching Vacation Bible School, Michal worked with the RCIA Adapted for Children program, which cemented her desire to do ministry full time.

“Sharing the faith with children brings me so much joy,” says Michal, the Preschool and Sacramental Preparation Coordinator. “When we look at our lives, this is the most important thing that we’ll ever teach our children.”

St. Vincent de Paul’s Religious Education program for the youngest members of our community exists as a “partnership with families for the Catholic formation of children.”

“The parents are the first teachers of their children, but we support them,” Michal says. “We’re available, and the parish offers a wide variety of classes for children including faith formation, Vacation Bible School, RCIA Adapted for Children and the Children’s Liturgy of the Word.”

Faith formation classes begin in October and continue until April, and this year there will be a few changes to better serve our families.

Preschool faith formation for children from 2 to 5 years old, a fun and interactive way to explore the faith at a young age, will be offered only from 9:15 a.m. until 10:30 a.m. on Sunday. A concurrent Adult Faith Formation program also will be offered.

“If they want, the adults can attend class while the children do,” Michal says. “Then they can go to the 10:45 a.m. Mass together as a family, and we have the Liturgy of the Word for children at all our Masses.”

This year, the Sacramental Preparation program for children from second to fourth grade will take place on Tuesday nights from 6 p.m. until 7:15 p.m. Children will prepare for the Sacrament of Reconciliation during the fall classes and prepare for First Eucharist during the spring classes.



*St. Vincent de Paul's Religious Education program*

“This distinction in preparation will offer additional time for reflection on the sacraments individually,” Michal says. “Parents are required to go to a class while the children are in class. They will listen to dynamic speakers on topics related to helping their children prepare.”

More catechists are always welcome and needed to serve our children, and anyone who is a practicing Catholic and has a desire to share his or her faith may be a catechist. Michal describes the parishioners who give to the program as “priceless.”

“So many parents ask themselves if they are worthy to teach or if they are going about teaching the right way,” Michal says. “It is so much easier to teach than people think! We give you all the support you need and have binders and special materials to share with you.”

For Michal, sharing her faith with the youngest members of our community is a calling and a source of joy that revitalizes her own faith.

“I feel like giving back in this small way is a mission,” Michal says. “I get so many blessings from working with the children. The things they say and teach me are unbelievably inspiring.”

*If you would like more information about Religious Education at St. Vincent de Paul, please reach out to Michal Tincup at 817-478-8206 or [mtincup@svdpcc.org](mailto:mtincup@svdpcc.org).*





# ST. VINCENT DE PAUL

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## MASSES

**Saturday Vigil:** 5:30 p.m.

**Sunday:** 9 a.m., 10:45 a.m. and 12:30 p.m.

**Weekdays: (M/Th/Fr)** 8:45 a.m. in the chapel  
**(Wed)** 6:00 p.m. in the chapel

**Holy Days:** 7 a.m. and 7 p.m.

**Tuesday Morning Prayer:** 8:45 p.m. in the chapel

**Confessions:** Saturday: 4-5 p.m. in the chapel

## Stewardship Council continued from front cover

Bishops. The USCCB has stated three convictions about stewardship, all of which we are pursuing in our parish community. First, the USCCB says we must cultivate disciples and discipleship. Mature disciples make a conscious decision, carried out in action, to be followers of Jesus Christ; second, beginning with conversion, this discipleship is not expressed in a single action, nor even in a number of actions over a period of time, but in an entire way of life; and third, disciples who practice stewardship recognize God as the origin of life, the giver of freedom, and the source of all they have, and are and will be.

St. Vincent de Paul also strives to be a faith community based on what are termed the Four Pillars of Parish Stewardship – Hospitality, Prayer, Formation, and Service. Through the Pillar of Hospitality, we try to extend a warm, hospitable and loving welcome to all who may join us to worship, study or attend a social event. Prayer calls

each of us to be disciples committed to both individual and communal prayer, public and private. Through the Pillar of Formation, we educate in our Catholic faith and in a stewardship way of life – a way of sharing what we are and what we have with a loving, generous and grateful heart. Finally, Service calls each of us to be servant ministers to the needs of our parish, our parish members, the wider community, and the Universal Church.

“We are really focusing on hospitality right now, making the parish a warm and welcoming place for those who are already members and those who may visit,” Bret says. “Our annual renewal of stewardship is planned for this coming January, and we want others in the parish to either renew their current stewardship efforts, or embrace them in ways they never have before. People are going to become more aware of who we are and what we are trying to do in the coming months.”

*If you would like to learn more about our Stewardship Council, please contact Bret Burgess at 817-526-0251 or Renée Bader at the parish office, 817-478-8206.*