

# ST. VINCENT DE PAUL CATHOLIC PARISH

## Embracing *Hope* and *Opportunities* for New Beginnings this New Year

**R**eciting *Compline*, or Night Prayer, at the end of the day is one of the age-old traditions of our Church. These time-tested words invite a person to look back upon their day, examining their conscience and taking stock of ways they may have failed Christ and others throughout the day. Then, after entrusting oneself to our merciful Father, the person is able to go to sleep peacefully, filled with the hope and promise of a fresh beginning. Similarly, says Fr. Philip Brembah, the New Year provides us annually with the perfect opportunity to re-examine our hearts and lives in an effort to commit ourselves more fully to our discipleship calling.

“This is a time for new beginnings in our spiritual journey,” Fr. Philip says. “It’s very important for us to take this opportunity to re-examine our spiritual life — to look at ourselves honestly, in all of our shortcomings and

*continued on back cover*

### Inside

- 2 Teaching Children to Live a Life of Stewardship
- 4 Questions and Answers About Our Annual Stewardship Renewal
- 6 A Life Rooted in the Faith: Meet the Longoria Family



## Teaching Children to *Live a Life of Stewardship*

**H**ow old do you have to be to practice stewardship? Can a 5-year-old embrace stewardship? How about a 10-year-old?

Although there is no guideline to what the right age is to begin to live a life of stewardship, God's call certainly extends to each of His children — even the young ones.

It is especially important to show children that they are not too young to share their time, talent and treasure to help build God's kingdom.

### *Sharing Your Time*

A young child can share of his time in a variety of ways appropriate to his ability. For example, during the day, a child can pray for a loved one that is hurt, or say prayers with his parents or siblings. He can participate in Mass each Sunday, and even take time from his day to thank God for a veteran who has served our country.

Spending time being virtuous — such as being patient, generous and kind — is also a great example of sharing our time for love of God.

### *Sharing Your Talent*

Using God-given talents to glorify God can also be performed by both young and old. An elementary school-age child can easily clean her room or perform chores such as raking leaves, doing laundry or taking care of pets. Making cards for people who are sick or who have had a death in the family are other concrete examples of being a faithful steward.

Even using our talents — such as playing a musical instrument or football — to the best of our abilities to give God glory is an example of being a good steward.

### *Sharing Your Treasure*

Although children do not have the same type of treasure to share as adults, instilling the importance of sharing finances is an important lesson.

If a child receives an allowance, he can return a portion of it to the Church in the collection basket. If he gets money for his birthday, he can give a small portion of it back to God in thanksgiving. Little ones can

even share things like their Halloween candy with their siblings or friends as a way of demonstrating generosity.

### *The Most Important Lesson*

Above all, the most important lesson to teach our children is why we share. We don't share because we "have to." We don't share because our parents tell us to. We share our time, talent and treasure with God because we are thankful for the blessings He has given us and we want to thank Him for His generosity.

Teaching these lessons at a young age will allow a lifetime of good stewardship to follow for even the youngest of God's children.



## *A Letter From Our Pastor*

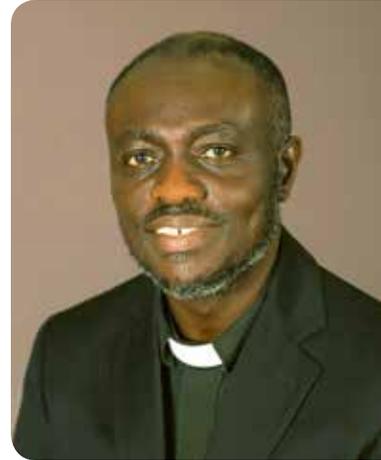
# New Year's Resolutions

Dear Parishioners,

**A**s we arrive at the New Year, it is customary that we make resolutions, which hopefully will be carried out during the course of the year. So many times these resolutions pertain to our physical lives — we resolve to exercise more, build a healthier diet, become more organized, etc. These resolutions may also involve the mental aspect of our lives — reading more, attending more cultural events, and so forth.

Too often we forget about the spiritual part of our lives. Our souls need to be tended to, and we need to make sure that we are deepening our relationship with God throughout the entire year.

I would like to give you a list of possible spiritual resolutions. While it might seem difficult for one person to undertake all of these, hopefully anyone can try several of these resolutions at one time or a number of them throughout the year.



- Attend Mass once a week over and above weekend liturgies.
- Spend a hour (or any amount of time) in Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament once a week.
- Pray the *Liturgy of the Hours* (the *Divine Office*) at least once a day.
- Read and meditate on a chapter of Scripture a day.
- Take up a devotion of the Church (e.g. Rosary, Stations, novena, other prayers, etc.) and pray it daily.
- Read a spiritual book once a month.
- Make a morning offering as you begin your day, then an examination of conscience as you end your day.
- Offer a prayer of blessing/thanksgiving before/after a meal.
- Take time to pray daily with your spouse/family.
- As an individual or a family, take time once a week to do some form of charitable work — visiting those who are homebound or in a nursing home, do some work for an elderly friend or neighbor, bring food to someone in need, etc.

This is not an exhaustive list, but hopefully it gives you an idea that the small things done with great love can make a world of difference — both in your life and the lives of others.

Do not try to overdo any of these, but build up to doing them on a regular basis, thus laying a reasonable foundation upon which to build. Enjoy doing these resolutions, and see what a blessing they are for you and others.

Let us pray that 2019 will be a year of grace and favor from God. I wish you and yours a very happy New Year!

Sincerely yours in Christ,

*Rev. Philip Brembah*  
Fr. Philip Brembah  
Pastor

This year I will...

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_



# ST. VINCENT DE PAUL

## Questions and Answers About Our Annual

Once again, it's time for our Annual Stewardship Renewal. Every year, someone asks, as you may have asked yourself, "Didn't we just have a Stewardship Renewal? Aren't we sufficiently 'renewed' by now?" Yes, we had a Stewardship Renewal last year, and we're going to have one next year, too! This is an annual occurrence – part of the rhythm of parish life at St. Vincent de Paul. Just as the Church proposes a time of spiritual renewal each Lent, we believe in the importance of a yearly examination of commitment. Is the Lord asking you to give more time, talent, or treasure to our parish this year? The following Q&A about our Stewardship Renewal should help you discern your commitments to St. Vincent de Paul this year.

*Commitment Weekend is February 2-3. Don't forget to bring your Commitment Card to Mass!*

I feel like my life is already too full with family obligations and work obligations. I barely even have time to relax. How can I possibly share my time and talents with St. Vincent de Paul?

We all have many obligations to our families, jobs, schools, and other endeavors. But we also all have the same number of hours in the day with which to accomplish these things. The issue is not how much time we have, but how we prioritize that time.

Before you fill out your Commitment Card, take some time to reflect on your priorities, and where God fits into your day-to-day life. Remember, living as true stewards of God's gifts involves giving back the first fruits of what He has given to us in thanksgiving, not the "leftovers."

I am happy with my current level of parish participation. Why do I need to keep filling out a Commitment Card every year?

As part of the renewal process, it is important that we consider our current level of participation in parish life at St. Vincent de Paul. Sometimes, the call to stewardship involves the quality of service in addition to its quantity. In looking through the opportunities for ministry available at the parish, you may find yourself drawn to a new ministry you haven't tried before, or new ways to share of your time with God to enrich and enlighten your prayer life. So, even though your current level of parish participation might not change drastically, the ways in which you participate may evolve as you grow in living the stewardship way of life.

Even if you end up continuing to participate in the exact same ministries as you have in the past, marking and turning in a Commitment Card means you have reviewed your present ministries and recommitted yourself to them.

I'm not very active in the Church and, frankly, feel like it may be too late to get involved. Why should I fill out a Commitment Card?

It's never too late to renew your faith life, and filling out a Commitment Card is a simple step through which you can immediately re-enter the life of the parish. Our parish community is not here to judge you, but to welcome and nourish you in your faith journey. Begin by checking the box that says, "Attend weekly Mass and Holy Days of Obligation," and take some time to discern additional ways in which God is calling you from that starting point.



**LIFT UP  
YOUR  
HEARTS**  
*St. Vincent de Paul*

**2019 COMMITMENT CARD**  
*My Offering of Time, Talent & Treasure*

\_\_\_\_\_  
**First & Last Name**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Phone**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Email**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Spouse: First & Last Name**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Spouse: Phone**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Spouse: Email**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Address**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**City**                      **State**                      **ZIP**

*Please bring this card to Mass on  
February 2/3 or mail using the envelope provided.  
Thank you and God bless you!*

# STEWARDSHIP RENEWAL

I'm physically unable to attend Mass or be active in parish life at St. Vincent de Paul. Is there any reason for me to submit a Commitment Card?

Of course! Your prayers are just as important to the success of our parish community in carrying out its mission as ministry participation and financial contributions. Take a moment to look over some of the opportunities to spend quiet time with God listed in the "Stewardship of Time" section of the Commitment Card, and take a step towards growing in your relationship with Christ and His Church.

I'm reluctant to make a financial pledge for the year in case my circumstances change and I'm unable to fulfill it. Should I?

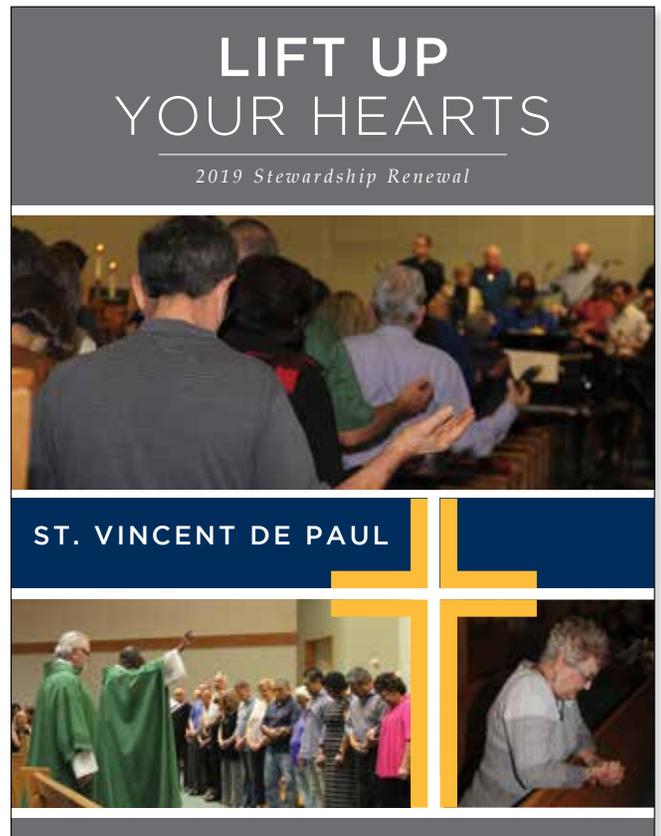
Your Commitment Card is not a legally binding contract; it is a pledge of intentions. Make your pledge based on what you are setting out to do to give back to God, and do your best to fulfill that pledge. If your financial circumstances change, your gift will likely change, as well, but it is still important to prioritize God first. Nobody is going to send the bill collector to your house if you can't fulfill your pledge due to a change in your financial situation! But we've all got to start somewhere, and it's important that we begin our commitment by writing down our goals for giving back of our gifts to God.

I've expressed interest in a ministry in the past through filling out a Commitment Card, but nobody from the parish ever followed up with me about it.

While we do our best to consistently follow up with everyone who has shown interest in the opportunities for ministry at St. Vincent de Paul, we are human, and we sometimes fall short in our follow-up. If this has happened to you in the past, we sincerely apologize, and we encourage you to renew your interest in any activities in which you might like to participate by filling out a Commitment Card this year. Every year, we go into the renewal with every intention of making sure that everyone who has expressed interest is contacted with more information, and we will do so again this year.

I don't agree with everything that goes on at St. Vincent de Paul. I feel like when I fill out a Commitment Card, it condones the things I disagree with.

In filling out a Commitment Card, you are not making a pledge between yourself and St. Vincent de Paul; you are making a pledge between yourself and God. Disagreements occur in life. This is a part of being human, and we respect the opinions of each and every member of our parish family. But it is of utmost importance that each of us fulfills our discipleship of Christ by growing in our relationship with Him and utilizing the gifts He has given us to carry out His mission on Earth, regardless of disagreements or misunderstandings. Beyond helping the parish, filling out a Commitment Card expresses a devotion to spiritual growth and a strong belief in the Catholic faith.



*Every parish family receives a special "Stewardship Package" in the mail that further explains our parish's vision of stewardship. It includes a booklet that describes every ministry in the parish, as well as your Commitment Card.*

## A Life Rooted in the Faith: MEET

Long before the Catholic Church began using the word “stewardship” to describe intentional discipleship, Raymond and Rosie Longoria were learning to serve God and His people. Growing up in Brownsville, Texas, both Raymond and Rosie were blessed with strong role models in living the faith.

After a five-year courtship that defied the historic rivalry of their colleges — Raymond attended Texas A&M while Rosie was a student at the University of Texas in Austin — the two were married in 1979. Over the past four decades, they have contin-

Like Rosie, Raymond feels blessed to have grown up in a devoutly Catholic home. So when the couple had children of their own, the decision to raise them in the Church was an easy one.

“I found that, growing up, there was so much the Church could offer, including connecting with folks and receiving their support,” Raymond says. “It offers so much that we wanted to be sure we exposed our sons to what we were exposed to. We introduced them to what the faith could be for them.”

The Longorias’ two grown sons, Michael and Matthew, were active in

ing Bible study, Vineyard, the Women’s Guild, the Bereavement Ministry, the Art and Environment Ministry, Empty Nesters and the Prayer Shawl Ministry.

Both Raymond and Rosie have found that the time they spend in Scripture study — whether it is through Vineyard or one of the other regular studies offered through our parish — has greatly deepened their faith.

“It allows me to really understand what’s going on at Mass,” Rosie says. “I understand the Scripture on a much greater level than if I had just heard it or read it, because I’ve studied it over the years. And you never finish studying it — it’s always an ongoing thing. Everybody you study with brings something to the table to help you understand it even better, and I really enjoy that.”

The Longorias also appreciate the fellowship that comes from participating in various ministries. As Rosie points out, the wonderful and generous parishioners in the Women’s Guild, Empty Nesters, and Prayer Shawl Ministry make her look forward to time spent with these groups.

“There are people who truly do so much more for the parish than I do,” she says. “I try to help where I can, and if they need something, I’m more than happy to help. I like the church and the people there, so it’s not a chore — I enjoy it.”

Raymond agrees wholeheartedly. Although his work as a civil engineer keeps him busy on projects all around the state, he can always find a good reason to make time for stewardship.

“If you focus on the positive things about the Mass and parish experience,



*“There are so many things to do at our church. Try different things. It doesn’t need to be a lot. Eventually you find something that you feel comfortable with, and you click with the people. It’s just about getting your foot in, finding what interests you, and finding where you can best serve.”*

— Rosie Longoria

ued to keep their life together firmly rooted in the faith.

Rosie traces her commitment to church life back to the influence of her mother, grandmother, and even great-grandmother.

“Stewardship was the example of my parents,” Rosie says. “It’s something they have always done, and I think you learn a lot from example. My great-grandmother was like that, too, so my mom picked it up from her, and I picked it up from my mom, and so on.”

the Church throughout their childhood and teenage years, attending religious education classes, altar serving and ushering here at St. Vincent de Paul. Without a doubt, their willingness to serve the parish stemmed from the living witness provided by their parents.

Raymond and Rosie have truly made stewardship an integral part of their life. Raymond serves as a lector and attends Vineyard, as well as the Thursday evening Bible study. Rosie participates in the Wednesday morn-

# THE LONGORIA FAMILY



*The Longoria family with Santa Claus — (from left) Raymond, Rosie, Matthew, Andrew (grandson), Christy and Michael*

you want to make the time for it,” he says. “Knowing that when you go to Mass, there will be folks there that you know, or that during the Mass, the Scripture might be something you don’t recall hearing, or hearing a new perspective from the priest — there are a lot of positives.”

One of the greatest rewards of the Longorias’ dedication to Church life is witnessing the faith that was ingrained in them by their parents continue to thrive in their family, down through the generations. Last year, the couple was blessed to see their first grandchild, 8-month-old Andrew, baptized by Fr. Philip.

Having experienced the many blessings of a life firmly rooted in the faith, Raymond and Rosie would encourage any parishioners at St. Vincent de Paul who may be thinking about becoming more active in the parish to come see the abundant life that God has waiting for them.

“There are so many things to do at our church,” Rosie says. “Try different things. It doesn’t need to be a lot. Eventually you find something that you feel comfortable with, and you click with the people. It’s just about getting your foot in, finding what interests you, and finding where you can best serve.”

# ST. VINCENT DE PAUL



5819 W. Pleasant Ridge Rd.  
Arlington, TX 76016  
(817) 478-8206  
[www.svdpsc.org](http://www.svdpsc.org)

## 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

## Embracing Hope and Opportunities for New Beginnings this New Year continued from front cover

sinfulness, but then also to open ourselves to whatever new ways God is asking us to embrace our universal calling to a life of holiness.”

This must always begin, says Fr. Philip, with building our relationship with Jesus Christ, the foundation of all our ministries and stewardship endeavors. For only by growing in our knowledge and love of the Lord can we successfully fill the deep inner longings of our hearts — become the men and women we were created to be.

“I believe that as Catholics, everything we do in terms of ministry must have a deep spiritual backbone, based on prayer and a personal relationship with Christ,” Fr. Philip says. “Otherwise, it is just like any other social work. Christ needs to be at the center of our ministries, which then become a form of active prayer. And only by returning to Him in prayer and formation can our good works truly become life-giving ministries.”

This can occur in many ways, such as through personal prayer time at home or in Eucharistic Adoration on Fridays at the Church, by becoming part of the parish’s Devotions Ministry or taking advantage of periodic Adult Faith Formation opportunities. And as our relationship with Christ deepens over time, it naturally takes root in further activism as the Holy Spirit guides us in the use of our time, talent and treasure for others. In turn, our time spent in prayer blesses the entire faith community.

So, as we each bid farewell to the past year with all of its triumphs and failures, and welcome in the hope and opportunities of the new, let us spend some time in quiet reflection considering what new spiritual commitments we are being called to make in 2019. This can be formal participation in a ministry or a personal commitment to more consistent prayer time. Yet no matter the offering, says Fr. Philip, “there is nothing too small” for our Lord as we journey further together this New Year.

*“I believe that as Catholics, everything we do in terms of ministry must have a deep spiritual backbone, based on prayer and a personal relationship with Christ. Otherwise, it is just like any other social work. Christ needs to be at the center of our ministries, which then become a form of active prayer. And only by returning to Him in prayer and formation can our good works truly become life-giving ministries.” — Fr. Philip Brembah*