



THE LOURDES WORD

WINTER 2026:
STEWARDSHIP OF
TIME AND TALENT-
PART 1



OUR LADY OF
LOURDES
CATHOLIC PARISH

PARISH MISSION
STATEMENT: WE,
THE FAITH
COMMUNITY OF
OUR LADY OF
LOURDES PARISH,
STRIVE TO LIVE,
SHARE AND BE
CHRIST IN ALL WE
DO.

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Time and talent sharing is not about doing everything or being perfect. It is about offering what you can, when you can.

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Everyone's gifts of time and talent come together to create this parish community that I have come to love in the years I've been here.

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Laughing with others while we share has been another blessing from God.

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*And you can't pluck a rose, all fragrant with dew,
Without part of its fragrance remaining with you.*

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Every one of us is talented in some way. Stewardship encourages us to use any talent we have to benefit an individual, the Church, or the community.

A Message from Fr. Jude

By Fr. Jude

Our Lady of Lourdes Parish is more than a place we gather on Sundays. It is a living community built on faith, generosity, and shared purpose for One Hundred and Seventeen years. One of the most meaningful ways we brought this community to life is through time and talent sharing.

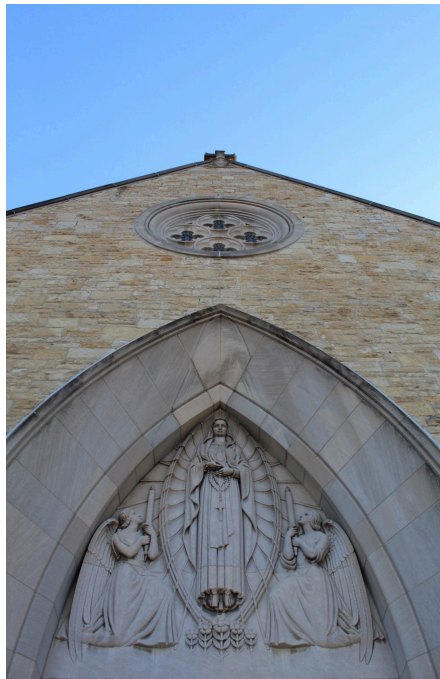
Each of us has been given unique gifts. Some are visible, like singing, teaching, organizing, or working with technology. Others are quieter but just as powerful in listening, welcoming newcomers, praying for others, offering encouragement, or lending a helping hand when it's needed most. When we share these gifts, Our Lady of Lourdes Parish grows stronger and more connected.

Time and talent sharing is not about doing everything or being perfect. It is about offering what you can, when you can. A small commitment: an hour a month, a helping hand at a parish event, or volunteering behind the scenes can make a big difference.

These acts of service support parish ministries and strengthen relationships. When we give our time and talents, we also receive something in return. Many parishioners discover new friendships, a deeper sense of belonging, and a renewed connection to their faith. Serving together reminds us that we are all part of one body, called to care for one another.

We invite everyone at Our Lady of Lourdes Parish to prayerfully reflect on the gifts God has entrusted to them and consider how they might be shared within our parish. Whether you are new to the community or have been here for years, there is a place for you and a role only you can fill. Together, through shared time and talents, we continue to build Our Lady of Lourdes Parish as a community rooted in faith, service, and love for centuries to come.

Peace
Fr. Jude



St. Vincent de Paul Society

By Paige Kervan

Seeing the face of Christ in those we serve, offering help without judgment, is a basic tenant of the St. Vincent de Paul Society. Vincentians, as members of the St. Vincent de Paul Society are known, work to help our neighbors, members of our community, who are struggling and, at times, without hope.

Home visits, a foundation of the Society, are fundamental in helping those in need. Twice a month, Vincentians make home visits to neighbors who have requested assistance. We take time during the home visit to listen to our neighbors; work with them to help them obtain necessary furniture, appliances, or clothing from the St. Vincent de Paul warehouse; provide them with food from our food pantry; refer them to our treasurer for assistance with utilities, medications, or other items for which we can pay; and we pray with them. Many of our neighbors just want someone to listen to them, and, often, to pray with them. Giving this time to others is invaluable.

Our Christmas program provides our neighbors with relief and hope during the Christmas season. We individually call each person who requests assistance. We talk with them about their children's needs. We listen to them without judgment. We learn about these families.

We learn that an elderly grandmother with a fixed income is raising her nine grandchildren, one of whom is autistic and battling leukemia. We learn that a family of four has finally secured housing, are no longer unhoused, but have no money to provide their two children with Christmas. We learn that a mother, whose 14-year-old son is in hospice care, would like a pair of soft pajamas for him for what will be his last Christmas. We assure these families that we will provide a food basket for their Christmas meals and gifts for their children, delivering these items to them. The relief the families feel knowing we will help is evident. We pray for them, and many times, we cry for them.

Jesus loved everyone, the rich and the poor. Jesus touched the lives of the poor, the forgotten, the unwanted. He saw them. He cared for them. He went to them. He helped them. Vincentians follow His footprint. We go to our neighbors in need – to their homes – and work diligently to provide the assistance we can and make referrals to other resources to help where we cannot. Vincentians see our neighbors, we listen to our neighbors without judgment, and we pray that we can help our neighbors. We strive to see the face of Christ in our neighbors.



“WE MUST LOVE OUR NEIGHBOR AS BEING MADE IN THE IMAGE OF GOD, AND AS AN OBJECT OF HIS LOVE” ~ST. VINCENT DE PAUL

The Gift of Time and Talent

By Bernice Berlage

What do your time and talent mean to you? How valuable are they to you? When I ask myself these questions, I would say they can be more valuable to me than my treasure. It can be easier to make a monetary donation than to give my time to ministry in our parish and Church. However, time and talent are more of a contribution of my very self.

Since time and talent feel more valuable, I want to use them where I feel they will be most impactful. No one would want me to coach CYO athletics as I have no experience playing competitive sports. So I'm sticking to what I know better. I'm more comfortable being behind the scenes, so you won't see me at the cantor stand or proclaiming the Word of God during Mass. God bless those who take care of these ministries.

I'm better at organizing things and taking care of the details, so I choose to be a sacristan, taking care of preparing for the celebration of our liturgies at Lourdes. I still get to participate in hospitality, just on a smaller scale, by welcoming the scheduled liturgical ministers as they arrive, and having some lovely chats in the sacristy before the start of Mass. I also get to spend some quiet, contemplative time in the stillness of the church before everyone arrives for Mass.

Because I have learned to sew and enjoy it, another area where I'm blessed to be able to contribute is in the creation of the baptismal garments we give to the families of the infants and children who are baptized here at Lourdes. This ministry has gone on here long before I became a parishioner here, starting with a group of ladies who got together to sew in the basement of the parish rectory. Joan Marshall, who passed away recently, took up the ministry on her own after the sewing group disbanded and made all the baptismal garments for more than 25 years. When she felt she could no longer continue, she approached the newly formed In Stitches group to ask for help. As a part of that group, I have now taken up some of the sewing of these little keepsakes. As I work on these, I think of Joan and her work behind the scenes and the value of that contribution of time and talent to so many families.

Everyone's gifts of time and talent come together to create this parish community that I have come to love in the years I've been here. It's a community that money can't buy and is made better for everyone's contribution of their very self to it.



"GOD'S LOVE CALLS US TO MOVE BEYOND FEAR. WE ASK GOD FOR THE COURAGE TO PUT ON FAITH, HOPE AND LOVE AS WE GO OUT INTO THE WORLD AND BECOME THE WORD IN BODY AS WELL AS SPIRIT." - POPE FRANCIS

Busy Hands, Happy Heart

By Diane Beasley

“Busy hands make for a happy heart.” I was taught that when I was a small child. Did I listen to mother any better than most children listen to their mothers? Absolutely not. It took about 10 years for it to sink into my brain. I wanted to play not do hand work.

Once the girls needed formals for dances, I really got into sewing. That led to knitting, embroidery, counting cross stitches, and baking.

With no children at home by then, it was time to reach out to share my hobbies. That led me in a whole new direction because of seeing the smiles on the faces of sick people (prayer shawls). Laughing with others while we share has been another blessing from God.

I have never been bored. Thank you, God, for not forgetting to keep me going in new directions.



Artwork by Diane Beasley

Flowers Leave Their Fragrance on the Hand That Bestows Them

*By Helen Steiner Rice
Submitted by Patty Brown*

There's an old Chinese proverb that, if practiced each day,
Would change the whole world in a wonderful way.

Its truth is so simple, it's so easy to do,
And it works every time and successfully, too.
For you can't do a kindness without a reward,
Not in silver nor gold but in joy from the Lord.
You can't light a candle to show others the way
Without feeling the warmth of that bright little ray.
And you can't pluck a rose, all fragrant with dew,
Without part of its fragrance remaining with you.



Artwork by Bill Bakemeyer

Rethinking Stewardship

By Pat Browne

Stewardship. What does it really mean? The dictionary says that it is “the responsible planning, management and care of something entrusted to one’s care for the benefit of others.” Yuk. That sounds like work. It sounds boring. Besides, what does stewardship have to do with my relationship with God. Isn’t going to Mass, praying, taking care of family, and trying to be good enough?

But, wait a minute. Does the word mean something more, in the context of church? I read that it means giving time (of which I have precious little), talent (in which I am sadly lacking), and treasure (which is often in short supply). But what exactly does that translate to in real terms? Fr. Jude keeps mentioning it, so it must be important enough to explore. I decided to consider what Scripture has to say about it.

Right away I began to recognize how much time Jesus gave to everyone he encountered. He spent time with friends, followers, neighbors, outsiders, and even those opposing him. Scripture shows him healing, listening, offering support, teaching, enjoying a meal, and whatever else the occasion called for. He exemplified balancing this with time spent in prayer, solitude and rejuvenation. Galatians 6:9-10 offers: “Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up.”

It didn’t take too much reflection to find Scripture related to talent. 1 Corinthians 12:4-6 teaches that the Spirit gives different kinds of gifts, and there are different ways to serve.

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Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; and there are varieties of service, but the same Lord; and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who empowers them all in everyone. To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good.

1 Corinthians 12:4-7

Rethinking Stewardship (Continued from page 6)

I began to see that the Gospels are full of evidence that each of the Apostles had unique gifts and qualities that Jesus called into service. Together they were able to do what none of them could accomplish on his own.

I didn't have much trouble finding references for the proper use of financial resources either. In Matthew 6:24, Jesus teaches that "No one can serve two masters." Apparently, it's either God or money. In Matthew 25: 35-40, Jesus equates feeding the hungry and caring for the poor with ministering to him directly. Luke 10:7 indicates that we should support the clergy. Corinthians 9:7 teaches that "Each of you should give what you have decided in your heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.

As I look around at my fellow parishioners, I see those who give time, talent, and treasure in many ways. I see lectors, cantors, sacristans, Eucharistic ministers, musicians, and decorators. I see those who serve funeral meals, lead prayer services and discussion groups, manage live streaming, take Communion to shut-ins, serve on the parish council, volunteer at school functions or in the parish office, wash and prepare the linens for Mass, organize the schedules, serve as hospitality ministers, and many other behind-the-scenes ministries. What I see in these folks is not boredom or feelings of burden. I see joy, willingness, kindness, generosity, and holiness that comes from serving our Lord by serving his Church and his people.



Artwork by Jim Lynch

Co-responsibility – a New Christmas Tradition?

By Sally Krause

Don't get me wrong. I love Christmas. When the leaves begin to turn, I start counting the days until we can put up the Christmas tree, assemble the nativity scene in its place of honor, break out the ever-growing collection of snowmen, decorate the mantle...the list goes on. Shopping for presents, baking, surprises, and the search for silly socks begins.

These decorations, and the host of other seasonal traditions, have been a part of my family's lives for 20 plus years now. You might say it's a key part of our family culture. The lion's share of the responsibilities has fallen to me and in all fairness, I love it. (See above – I love Christmas.) For the past few years, though, it's taken me a bit longer each season. I've got a lot less energy. This past year, I fell down the steps bringing out the many tubs and bags. It's time for change.

Pilgrims of hope

Archbishop Thompson talks frequently about the notion of co-responsibility. The idea is that we are called to work together as a community, answering Jesus' call to love our neighbor as ourselves and to use the gifts He gave each of us to accomplish His plans.



“As baptized Catholics and children of God, we are called to follow Jesus Christ as missionary disciples and pilgrims of hope. We accept the invitation to proclaim the Gospel joyfully and to minister to all our sisters and brothers in Jesus's name as co-responsible witnesses. As one Body of Christ, we prayerfully discern God's will for our Local Church through attentive listening to the Word of God, prayerful celebration of the Sacraments, ministry to the spiritual and temporal needs of others, and respectful dialogue with one another and with all members of God's family.” Go Forth in Joy and Hope as Missionary Disciples – A Pastoral Letter and Plan for the Archdiocese of Indianapolis.

We have been blessed with one dedicated pastor at Our Lady of Lourdes for as long as I can remember. There was also an administrative structure in place that kept things running smoothly – which is no small accomplishment in a parish as large as ours. That all changed last year when we shifted to share a pastor with Little Flower. That shift sent ripples out to affect every detail in our administration, rendering many of them impossible. It's time for change.

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Artwork by Bill Bakemeyer

Stewardship

Recently, I was with the In Stitches ministry, and the topic of *The Lourdes Word* article came up. It was interesting how each person had thoughts about the article but felt odd about speaking about why “I” volunteer. It was then, it dawned on me, this didn’t need to be about what “I” do; it’s all about what we do. Why do we volunteer? In this ministry, we work on a variety of projects with the community in mind. We have made quilts for the Fall Festival, an assortment of items for Birthline, projects including cancer caps, and items for nursing homes. I’ve learned so much about our community and fellowship with these ladies.

In the Spiritual Journey Ministry, we seek ways to bring information through presentations with guest speakers for our Feast and Faith and Mornings of Reflection series. With Feast and Faith, we have been blessed to have a wide range of topics from learning about other religions such as Judaism, Buddhism and Muslim beliefs and practices. Past speakers have also shared their pilgrimage visits. We are always open to new ideas. Mornings of Reflection are a way of preparing ourselves for the journeys of Advent and Lent with reflections on readings and prayers, guiding and helping us to understand and prepare for these vital liturgical moments in our faith. Each attendee seems to come away learning something new about our teachings and seeing with a new perspective. Each of us volunteers for a variety of reasons. If you base your time and talent on your strength,

then it is more of a blessing than you can ever know. We try to be good stewards of our faith, our church family, and our beloved church. We each feel a responsibility to help all this flourish.

Looking at the definition of stewardship by the USCCB, I see it is a list of 3 items: 1) Receiving God’s gifts gratefully 2) Cherishing and tending God’s gifts responsibly and 3) Sharing God’s gifts in love and justice.

Perhaps this goes to the heart of the matter. We are so grateful for the many blessings in our lives; yes, we each have trials, troubles, and obligations as well, but our gratitude for our blessings is immeasurable. Within our various stewardship roles, each of us is tending to God’s gifts and simultaneously sharing our blessings. These roles do not necessarily take a lot of time out of our days; however, the days are vastly improved because of them.

On a personal level, the people I have met while volunteering have enriched my life more than I can ever repay. I have learned so much more about my faith by all of the conversations and stories that have been shared with each person that has blessed my life.

Had I not stepped out of my comfort zone to volunteer, I would not have met so many new friends in my faith family. This exemplifies growth through stewardship.



EACH OF YOU SHOULD USE WHATEVER GIFT YOU HAVE RECEIVED TO SERVE OTHERS, AS FAITHFUL STEWARDS OF GOD’S GRACE IN ITS VARIOUS FORMS. - 1 PETER 4:10

Stewardship in Action

Compiled by Linda Abner

The following are messages of gratitude for stewardship published in the bulletin over the last few years. They show how the Our Lady of Lourdes community is living our stewardship.

“Thank you so much for your kindness and support at the time of our mother's passing. We extend our heartfelt thanks to the staff and parishioners of OLL...”

“I want to thank all of you for the prayers offered for my brother this past year...things looked bleak, but God is so good and answers all your prayers...”

“Our family would like to thank the Bereavement and Mercy Meal Committees, as well as all the parishioners of OLL for your kindness and hospitality...it meant the world to us at this difficult time...”

Every one of us is talented in some way. Stewardship encourages us to use any talent we have to benefit an individual, the Church, or the community.

“Thank you to our Scouts and parishioners for the wonderful welcome and support of the Bethlehem Peace Light...”

“Thank you to all of the parishioners of OLL for your support during the past months and with the loss of my beloved wife...please keep us in your prayers...”

“We would like to extend our sincere gratitude to everyone who donated food, purchased gifts, or assisted with deliveries...we delivered food baskets and gifts to 30 families with children...thank you for helping bring joy and relief to those in need during this holiday season...”

“On behalf of our family, we would like to extend a heartfelt thanks to everyone who took part in the Memorial Mass...and to the wonderful ladies & gentlemen who provided the mercy meal after...we appreciate all the love and support we received from our Parish family...”

Most of us are generous when it's convenient for us. We are generous when we have the time or the money. But, real generosity is the opposite of that: it means giving in Stewardship, of one's time, money, compassion, forgiveness or mercy when it's not convenient and not on our schedule, but on the other person's timeline.

“Thanks to everyone who showed up to help on Good Friday evening...our liturgical celebrations are greatly enhanced by your efforts...”

“Thank you to everyone who helped make the Confirmation retreat possible, and more meaningful...our drivers, and everyone who got up early and came to church to send us off with prayer and support...”

“I want to thank all the volunteers who participated in the Habitat for Humanity build...we were able to complete all that was wanted...”

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Stewardship in Action *(Continued from Page 11)*

“Thanks to the parishioners who offered to donate blood...up to 90 individuals will benefit from your generosity...”

There are different kinds of spiritual gifts but the same Spirit; there are different forms of service but the same Lord; there are different workings but the same God who produces all of them in everyone.

1 Corinthians 12:4-6

“Thank you for supporting the Birthline Baby Shower! We are very grateful for your generosity...your contributions will assist many needy mothers and children...”

“We would like to thank the Girl Scouts for preparing the lovely Easter baskets for our shut-ins...they have been very well-received and much appreciated...”

“Many thanks to those who were so generous with their donations to the Lift Project...100+ hygiene bags were sent to moms & women in shelters and assistance programs... God bless you...!”

Of all the gifts that God gives us, the one He wants the most is our heart. He wants us to share out of love for Him, not out of obligation. Living Stewardship in parish ministry and contributing money to support our parish mission is important, but it's more important to spend time in prayer with God daily and discern how He is calling us to be generous with all of our gifts – not just the visible ones, but the invisible ones like love, mercy, compassion, and forgiveness.

“Thank you for your generous response to ICAN! Over 40 coats were given, assisting 30+ neighbors in need...”

“Our family offers sincere gratitude to the OLL community for prayers, love and acts of kindness...the heart of Jesus was evident in you all...”

“Thank you for your help at the Confirmation Mass, and for providing images of saints for Eucharistic retreat...even if our youth don't know your name, they know you care...”

“To all those who accepted the prayer cards of our SRE and Sacramental preparation groups – Thank you! We appreciate your willingness to pray for the spiritual good of these younger parishioners...”

We as Christian Stewards are made in God's image and likeness. When you look at others, do you see the face of Jesus in them? When others look at you, do they see the face of Jesus in you? When we realize that all lives matter to God, then gratitude and generosity become easier. We are one Body of Christ; when one of us is hurting, all of us feel the pain.

“Whatever you did for one of the least of my brothers, you did for me.”

Matthew 25:40

The Lourdes Word is an attempt for us, the followers of Christ, to reflect publicly on our faith journey. Each edition has a specific theme. In this edition are reflections on “Stewardship of Time and Talent.”

We would like to thank all those who contributed to this edition.

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This edition is a two-part series. If you would like to share your experience or reflection on “Stewardship of Time and Talent” for the second edition, please send writings or artwork to andreaflcak@hotmail.com by May 1st.

Prayer for Generosity

*O my God,
teach me to be generous:
to serve You as You
deserve to be served;
to give without counting the cost;
to fight without fear
of being wounded;
to work without seeking rest;
and to spend myself without
expecting any reward,
but the knowledge that
I am doing Your Holy Will.
Amen.*

— Ignatius of Loyola