



St. John the Baptist

CATHOLIC CHURCH

In this Issue:

- 2 Building The Domestic Church
Living Stewardship in Our Family as Pandemic Continues
- 3 “Coincidental” Stewardship
- 4 Questions & Answers About Our Annual Stewardship Renewal
- 6 Weekday Holy Hours:
In Uncertain Times, God Remains Present
- 7 Our Annual Parish Stewardship Summary

Need a Lift? There is a Ministry for Those Who Need a Ride

Denise Ramos remembers what it was like to need a helping hand. Her mother, Bernice, was sick and in need of daily treatments. At the time, the cancer center in Joliet had a list of volunteers who could drive her there. So, this assistance with transportation was a huge help for Denise, her brother and their spouses, since they all worked full time.

“We were so thankful that the cancer center had that and it didn’t cost anything,” Denise says.

When a parishioner recently suggested a ministry like this at our parish, Denise didn’t waste a minute. Now, the Driving People to Appointments Ministry exists to connect volunteers with people who need rides to doctor appointments, therapy sessions, prescription pick-up and Mass. Some of the current volunteers were already helping fill this need, but now it’s become an official ministry.



Mary Rohrer is a volunteer for the Driving People to Appointments Ministry.

Denise does the connecting for those in need of volunteers. As our parish secretary, this is a good fit for her. Some people need a ride to Chicago and other suburbs, while some need help with local rides. Volunteers are

continued on back cover

St. John the Baptist

BUILDING THE DOMESTIC CHURCH

Living Stewardship in Our Family as Pandemic Continues

As the COVID-19 pandemic continues, the question of how to strengthen our family faith and continue to live Stewardship as a Way of Life while separated from the sacraments and parish life is being put to the test.

Our priests and parish leaders already have found new ways to minister to our parish family from a distance. Now, it is our own time to shine within our own homes. It is our time to seize this opportunity and continue to build our own Domestic Church.

What is the Domestic Church? Simply put, it is our family – the smallest body of gathered believers in Christ. The early Church fathers understood the home was fertile ground for discipleship, sanctification, and holiness. And the Domestic Church plays a key role in this as the primary place where we practice coming to intimately love others.

Even before the pandemic, in recent years, our Holy Father Pope Francis placed great emphasis on the family, asking us as Catholics to explore the meaning and the theology of the Domestic Church.

During his address at the World Meeting of Families during his 2015 apostolic visit to the United States, Pope Francis told us, “Love is shown by little things, by attention to small daily signs which make us feel at home. Faith grows when it is lived and shaped by love. That is why our families, our homes, are true domestic churches. They are the right place for faith to become life, and life to grow in faith.”

Now, as the pandemic continues to distance us from our parish community and affects the way we live our faith and practice stewardship, it is now more important than ever to discern the unique role God has in mind for our lives, and the lives of our family members.

If your family truly is committed to answering the call to live as intentional disciples of Christ, our response to this call starts in the home through stewardship.

As Catholics, we often associate stewardship with sharing our time, talents and resources with our parish. We see it as volunteering and helping to build our parish community. Rarely, do we recognize the need for stewardship in our own homes.



But what can you do to live out stewardship as a Domestic Church?

You can set aside time each day for personal and family prayer. If you are still unable to attend Mass, you and your family can participate in the Sunday liturgy and daily Masses in your home via livestream. Read and reflect each day on the daily Mass readings, which are available online at www.usccb.org/bible. Do some online faith formation together.

Other ideas include simply being kind to each other, doing something extra for your spouse or children, avoiding criticism, or working on being more patient with a family member who sometimes can be challenging to be around. Help a family member financially during these challenging times. Pray for our family members and each of their unique needs. Spend extra time with a child and our spouse – make that a priority worked into each week.

The possibilities for living stewardship within our Domestic Churches are endless. How we treat each other in our homes is as important as praying together when living out stewardship. In a nutshell, live in your home with your faith-filled family celebrating your Catholic identity!

Stewardship is not just something we do within the confines of our parish walls. It is meant to be lived 24/7, to be practiced anywhere and everywhere. And it begins with our Domestic Church – our families.

By focusing on new ways to share our Time, Talent and Treasure together within our own homes – both during the pandemic and after the storm passes – we can make faith the source and center of our family lives and fulfill our mission as the Domestic Church.

A Letter From Our Pastor

"Coincidental" Stewardship

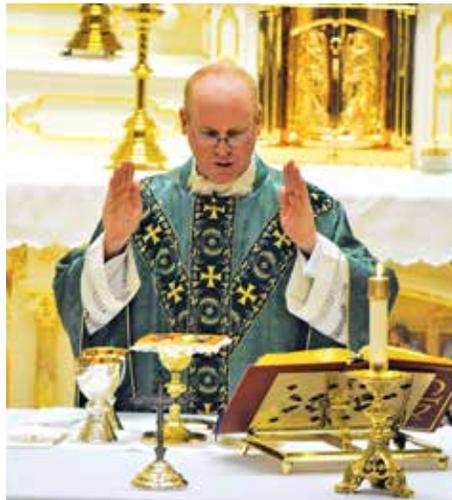
Dear Parishioners,

The famous author G.K. Chesterton once said, "Coincidences are God's way of staying anonymous." Since fully embracing the stewardship way of life, coincidences have become cherished experiences for which I thank God – and rightly so! While God stays anonymous, coincidences are His way of interacting with the world He created. Importantly, as we have been continually impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, and with many of our circumstances changing day to day, we can be grateful for His "coincidental" intervention.

As I continue to witness the grace-filled effects of the stewardship way of life on our parish, and in my own life, it is definitely God's hand at work in our lives of faith. If some identify a coincidence as a "surprise blessing" that lifts the spirits and draws one closer to gratefulness to God, we cannot deny that in those circumstances that God is giving us the grace to live and celebrate our faith. So, let's celebrate the coincidences!

Celebrate the coincidence that Chesterton himself converted to Catholicism late in his life, yet wrote book after book affirming and defending the Catholic faith long before his conversion. Four years after Chesterton joined the Catholic Church, he wrote a phenomenal book called *The Catholic Church and Conversion*. It is one of the best works on conversion to Catholicism, as well as a wonderful description of conversion to the stewardship way of life. The same experiences, or "coincidences," apply when we find ourselves drawn into the understanding, practice and expression of discipleship, known to us as "stewardship."

Chesterton describes conversion in three steps.



"The convert takes his first step rather unwittingly when he decides he's going to be fair to the Catholic Church," he wrote. The convert to stewardship must also dispel the "myths of stewardship" and give it a chance.

This first step of conversion then leads to a long and enjoyable second step, which is the utter fascination of learning what the Catholic Church really does teach. Chesterton says, "It is like discovering a new continent full of strange flowers and fantastic

animals, which is at once wild and hospitable." For the stewardship convert, it is recognizing that stewardship is a practical way of living the Gospel. It makes sense, and others are doing it with joy and passion. What they have, the convert also wants.

Then, the convert to Catholicism suddenly realizes with a shock that he can no longer be detached and impartial about the Catholic Church. The convert to the stewardship way of life realizes this is the way he or she wants to live – and makes the commitment to do so.

If this were not true of what Christ has called us to be, I would not be writing this today. If this were not true of our commitment to stewardship, you may not be reading this today. And, if this were not true of a stewardship parish such as ours, we would not be the faithful stewards we are today. Wouldn't you also agree it is a "coincidence" to thank God for each day of our lives?

In Christ,

Fr. Butler

Fr. Butler, Pastor

St. John the Baptist

QUESTIONS & ANSWERS ABOUT OUR

This has most certainly been a trying and unusual year, as we have navigated through uncharted waters. In the face of great uncertainty or difficulty, it is easy to become complacent. Yet, this is not what God calls us to do. We are called to live stewardship as a way of life – in the good, bad or uncertain times. We know that God is always present for us!

Our Stewardship Renewal reminds us that God's gifts never stop being poured out. In turn, we never should have reason to stop thanking Him. So, let us take this Stewardship Renewal as an opportunity to strengthen our relationship with God in the midst of our rapidly changing world.

*Commitment Weekend is
September 26-27. Don't forget to
return your Commitment Card!*

How do I use my Commitment Card?

Your Commitment Card allows you to make commitments to prayer, parish ministries, and offertory giving. It is designed to be used by the whole family.

Time Section: Everyone should be able to check the boxes to commit to attend Mass on Sundays and Holy Days or to view the Masses online during the crisis. In addition to those commitments, try to check at least a few other items. Daily prayer should be a priority for every person trying to grow closer to God. We recognize that the current crisis may impact your ability to carry out your commitments. Know the Lord sees what is in your heart and is pleased with your best efforts.

Talent Section: You can either sign up for new ministries or re-commit to your current ministries. Be sure to write your first name next to the ministry! This is especially important if the card is being used by more than one person.

Treasure Section: Clearly print how much money you plan to give each week or month to our parish. Try to take a step toward giving five percent of your income to St. John the Baptist.

Issues like my age, physical limitations, and the current crisis prevent me from being active in the parish. Should I still turn in a Commitment Card?

Yes! The first section of the card – Stewardship of Time – is the most important because it allows you to make commitments to prayer. Even if you can't join a ministry or make it to Mass on Sunday, you can still pray for our parish. Your spiritual support has tremendous value in the eyes of God.

One time I turned in a card, but no one ever called me when I signed up for a ministry.

If this happened in the past, please forgive us! And don't give up on filling out your Commitment Card! We have a very good plan to call every person interested in joining a new ministry. If for some reason the ministry leader does not call you within four weeks of turning in your card, let the parish office know.

How much should I give?

Your gift is entirely dependent on how much God has given you. At St. John the Baptist, we ask that you give five percent to our parish, one percent to the diocese, and four percent to other charities. Why a percentage of income? First, because the tithe (10 percent) is a scriptural benchmark that the Church has honored for centuries (see Malachi 3:10). Secondly, we give a percentage of income because it is a common-sense standard by which everyone can equitably support the parish. Most of all, we give because we believe God comes first in everything, even finances.

ANNUAL Stewardship Renewal

What if I can't fulfill my financial pledge?

While our pledge is not a "contract," we should all make a good-faith effort to fulfill it. Of course, if your financial circumstances change – if you lose your job, for instance – then the amount of money you give the Church will change, too. Likewise if you get a raise or bonus. The biggest reason many people don't fulfill their pledge is that they attend Mass at another parish when they go on vacation, attend a wedding, etc. If you're out of town, just make up for the missed Sunday when you write your next check to the parish. Using your envelopes is a good way to see which Sundays you missed.

Even before the crisis, I didn't go to Mass frequently. Why turn in a Commitment Card?

Because this is your chance to turn over a new leaf! Why not make a commitment to God to come to Mass every Sunday once the crisis is over, and until then, commit to viewing the Mass online each week, then write down that commitment? Even if that's the only commitment you make, take a step forward. Jesus Himself is waiting for you!

What happens if I don't return my Commitment Card?

We will send you a reminder letter to encourage participation. Please make every effort you can to participate. Our Stewardship Renewal is a very important annual event in the life of our parish. You and your family are part of what makes St. John the Baptist a great community! Most importantly, your commitments are actually promises to Christ Himself. All of us are called to give back to God a portion of what He has given us.

GRATEFULNESS
2020 Stewardship Renewal

GRATEFULNESS

2020 COMMITMENT CARD
St. John the Baptist Catholic Church

First & Last Name

Phone

Email

Spouse: First & Last Name

Spouse: Phone

Spouse: Email

Address

City State ZIP

Please bring this card to Mass on **September 26/27**,
or mail using the envelope provided.
Thank you and God bless you!

Every parish family receives a special "Stewardship Package" 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.

St. John the Baptist

Weekday Holy Hours:

IN UNCERTAIN TIMES, GOD REMAINS PRESENT

As we find ourselves in the midst of a global pandemic, this year has been marked in many ways by the rituals, traditions and celebrations that we have missed. Graduations, birthdays, anniversaries, and other special occasions have all looked a little different over the last seven months. As Catholic Christians, however, we know that one thing remains constant – God’s deep love for us and His presence in our lives. As soon as churches were allowed to reopen following the initial COVID-19 closures, Fr. Kevin Butler decided to provide our faith community with more opportunities than ever to spend time in the true presence of our Lord. With a Holy Hour offered at St. John the Baptist from 6 to 7 p.m. every weekday evening, the chance to sit with our Lord in the Eucharist provides an irreplaceable comfort and blessing during these unprecedented times.

For one hour every day, Monday through Friday, Christ in the Eucharist is exposed on the high altar of our church. The experience of Adoration is truly powerful, as the sanctuary lights remain dim with a single spotlight on our Lord. Throughout the Holy Hour, Fr. Butler is available at the back of the church for confession or spiritual direction. This time in Adoration is rewarding for both Fr. Butler and our parishioners.

“It has been really fruitful,” Fr. Butler says of the Holy Hour. “I’ve had parishioners coming to me with pretty serious things going on in their lives, and I’m just there for them to come and share if they just need to talk, or for absolution. There is so much healing that comes from the Eucharist itself, from sitting in the presence of Jesus and allowing Him to love you. When asked what he did in Adoration all day, St. John Vianney said, ‘I look at Jesus and He looks at me.’ We make ourselves present to God, and this helps us give ourselves continually to Him. His grace can only work in us more, the more we cooperate and let go.”

Eucharistic Adoration has long been a treasured spiritual practice for Fr. Butler. Before he was a priest, he would cover a Holy Hour in a convent from 1 a.m.

until 2:30. Spending time in the presence of Christ during those quiet night hours was transformative. Having experienced firsthand the power of Eucharistic Adoration, Fr. Butler has long held a Holy Hour at St. John the Baptist on Tuesdays and First Fridays. This year, seeking ways to keep parishioners connected to the Church during the pandemic, he decided to open up the experience to as many parishioners as possible by offering a Holy Hour every evening, Monday through Friday.

The rewards of coming to pray in the presence of the Lord are great.

“It’s so nice to get away from all the noise,” Fr. Butler says. “There is healing, grace and so much wisdom that happens during that time. And there is an energy praying together in a group that does my heart well. It moves my heart to see parishioners come out for the Holy Hour. I feel joy just seeing and praying with others.”

By offering the opportunity for people to come on any weeknight, Fr. Butler hopes that the Holy Hour attendance will continue to grow. He has been particularly pleased to see some parishioners bringing friends or family with them to experience this special prayer time, and he looks forward to seeing Eucharistic Adoration become a beloved devotion for many more parishioners and visitors in the weeks and months to come.

“It’s just needed,” he says. “I know that the Eucharist is our power source. Very few other religions have the Eucharist, and for us, it’s about Mary and the Eucharist. So many people don’t get what it is to fully understand and experience the Lord’s presence in the Eucharist. So we are trying hard to not make it a secret what people are missing out on!”

“If you want to grow in holiness, come to Adoration,” Fr. Butler adds. “If you can’t come for the hour, come for a few minutes even. This is something simple, but sometimes you do something simple and it’s very powerful. This is not a one-time thing – it’s offered every week, so it’s an open invitation to come out and give it a try.”

OUR ANNUAL PARISH STEWARDSHIP SUMMARY

Number of registered families	414	Baptisms	3	Marriages	0	Confirmations	21
First Holy Communions	1	Funerals	11	Interments	13		

The effect of Covid 19 has had a significant impact on parish revenues. Donations have dropped 10-20% as we all struggle to make ends meet. We have worked on reducing our operating cost, but as good stewards, we must maintain the parish and cemetery property. We were fortunate to receive a Covid 19 stimulus payment of \$33,100 which is included in parish revenues. I urge you to continue to support the parish and consider using on-line giving. To sign up select the on-line giving link on our web page stjbsom.org or call the office.

Parish Account Balances—Resources as of June 30	<u>2018</u>	<u>2019</u>	<u>2020</u>
Parish Checking Account	\$ 41,602	\$ 50,347	\$ 71,163
Other Investments Held at the Diocese			
DIAL* (Excluding Cemetery)	135,610	159,618	170,246
Catholic Foundation at Market Value	689,078	716,177	715,418

*Diocesan Investment and Loan Program (DIAL) is a cash account which earns interest. Money is Transferred between checking and DIAL based on timing of needs.

Parish Revenues	<u>2018</u>	<u>2019</u>	<u>2020</u>	FY 2021 <u>Budget</u>
FY-->				
Sunday and Holiday Collections	\$247,415	\$250,185	\$224,223	\$234,500
Poor Fund Collection	3,397	3,460	3,228	3,000
Martin Trust Income	69,437	72,118	72,501	70,000
Catholic Foundation Collections	6,948	5,116	3,994	4,200
Catholic Foundation Income/Loss*	5,818	27,095	(756)	0
DIAL Interest (excluding cemetery)	2,708	2,839	3,160	1,740
All Other revenues **	<u>94,087</u>	<u>109,338</u>	<u>75,219</u>	<u>30,420</u>
Total Revenues	\$429,810	\$470,151	\$381,569	\$343,860
Parish Expenses				
Payroll	\$167,679	\$143,176	\$147,796	\$152,472
Religious Education	35,012	29,232	12,379	12,755
All Other Expenses	<u>189,278</u>	<u>215,731</u>	<u>156,867</u>	<u>159,981</u>
Total Expenses	\$391,969	\$388,139	\$317,042	\$325,208

*Catholic Foundation Changes from the start to the end of the fiscal year (not a budgeted item)

**Excludes Diocese collections and cemetery revenues. FY 2020 includes a PPP Small Business grant of \$31,300 as part of the Federal Government Covid 19 response. All other revenues are expected to decrease as we anticipate no fundraising opportunities for at least the first half of FY 21.

St. John Cemetery	<u>2018</u>	<u>2019</u>	<u>2020</u>	FY 2021 <u>Budget</u>
DIAL (Cemetery Balances)	351,142	360,381	336,036	3,200
Revenues	59,003	52,213	43,941	14,872
Expenses	39,069	51,488	42,642	48,100

*Cemetery revenues include withdrawals from DIAL to reimburse the operating account for expenses paid from that account. (FY 2020 = 32,696). Anticipated expenses for FY 2021 include the cost of installing a statue on the existing columbarium.

If you desire to see more specific details, please call the parish office to set an appointment.



Non-Profit Org.
U.S. Postage
PAID
Somonauk, IL
60552
Permit No. 25

320 S. Depot Street
PO Box 276
Somonauk, IL 60552
Phone: 815-498-2010
www.stjbsom.org

Return Service Requested

Mass Times

Saturdays – 5 p.m.
Sundays – 8 and 11 a.m.
Weekdays – Mon-Fri 8 a.m.

Sacrament of Reconciliation

Mon, Tue, Wed, Fri – 6-7 p.m.
Saturdays – 4 p.m. or by appointment

Adoration

Mon-Fri – 6-7 p.m.

Need a Lift? *continued from front cover*

never obligated to drive someone – they can choose the rides with which they are comfortable.

“It is a project to have to go to Chicago from here, especially if it’s first thing in the morning,” Denise says. “If the person is elderly and married, you can’t expect a spouse to do the driving, especially in heavy traffic.”

With many of our parishioners being older, this ministry fills an important need. Although the ministry has taken a break to protect against transmission of COVID-19, Denise hopes the transportation assistance will continue in the future.

Denise has even given a few rides and has found it to be very rewarding.

“This really helps people out when a person is ill and more vulnerable,” she says. “It might take the edge

off a family member who is caring for that person. Helping with this can give you meaning to your life.”

Helping give a ride is also a way to meet parishioners. And, as Denise points out, you may even make a new friend!

Denise invites anyone to get involved who has the time and reliable transportation. The more volunteers there are, the larger the pool of potential drivers becomes. Drivers are given all the particulars on the need including who, where and how long the appointment may be.

“Because of the pandemic, I’m not sure when this program will be back in action, but it would be wonderful to have a long list of volunteers,” Denise says.

*If you would like to get involved in this ministry, or to request a ride,
please call the parish office at 815-498-2010.*