

# Faith In Action



## STEWARDSHIP IS

### *Unconditional Love – Our Faith Response*

**T**he story of the Prodigal Son is one of the best-known parables. No matter how often we read it, we can't help but be moved. At times we may side with the older son, other times with the younger son. But how often do we identify with the father? The true "hero" of the story isn't either son – it's the father. The father, waits patiently, gives freely, and loves unconditionally. The father is a steward.

If we take a fresh look at the prodigal son, we can see that he is impatient and becomes quickly tired of his monotonous duties and wants more from life. He boldly asks his father for his share of the inheritance. The father gives him his share and the son wastes every penny. Once the money is gone, he is miserable and penniless. Desperate, he takes a job feeding pigs. I think it's fair to say, he hits rock bottom and returns home to ask his father for forgiveness.

As the prodigal son nears his home, his father sees him and runs to greet him, forgiving him before he can ask. The father throws a huge party in his young son's honor.

At the same time, the older son is coming home from a long day of work in the fields. He hears the music and laughter and can't believe that his father would do such a thing and feels betrayed, jealous, and angry. He had been by his father's side the whole time while his brother was wasting everything, yet their father was celebrating the younger son's return. This seems so unfair - but is it?

Wouldn't we all love a father who unconditionally loves us this way? God, our father, gives this love to us when we use our gifts wisely or when we thoughtlessly squander them. When we understand this, we can begin to be grateful and that gratitude takes us beyond ourselves. When we become grateful, we want to give. We want to be like the father.

Through our baptism, each of us has the power to change how we understand and live out our lives. Our response is an act of faith, an act of trust, an act of worship, and an act of belonging that expresses joyful thanks for God's many gifts to us.



## A Word from Msgr. Beach

Let me take this opportunity to offer my best wishes for a happy New Year to you and your families. At this beginning of the year, the Church pauses to reflect on the many ways in which Christ was made manifest to the world—the visit of the shepherds and the Magi, and His presentation in the Temple. All of this should cause us to reflect upon our own existence: where do we see Christ made present in our lives?

A wonderful setting in which to see Christ in the world is in the parish. For most Catholics, a local parish serves as the primary place of Christian community. As our office begins assisting parishes with promoting Stewardship in their parishes, especially with the help of our new Stewardship Toolkit for Parishes, we continue to be inspired by the profound faith and good works taking place in these communities. I pray that through Stewardship, our parishes will become even stronger centers of faith, hope, and charity in our communities.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Monsignor Francis W. Beach  
Archbishop's Delegate and Executive Director  
The Office for Stewardship and Development



## Contact The Office

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*Send your updates and photos via email to shanley@adphila.org. We'd love to include them in upcoming issues of the newsletter.*

### SEND US YOUR NEWS

Does your parish have exciting Stewardship News? We want to share it.

## Do You Tweet? Follow us on Twitter

For Stewardship news and updates follow us on Twitter @phillystewards. Topics include reflections on Sunday readings and best practices in Stewardship. See who we are following and who's following us!

### Why Tweet?

Twitter is one of the fastest growing social media outlets – it's concise, conversational and requires a minimal time commitment to keep up with current events in our Church. According to a 2011 survey conducted by Pew Research Centers, 66% of Americans use social media in some form. A significant percentage of these users say that connecting around a shared interest is a major reason they use social media.

follow us on  
**twitter**



Whether you are looking for a way to begin using social media or an additional tool to stay connected, Twitter is an excellent forum. Join the conversation @phillystewards.

## A Stewardship Toolkit

Every great team needs a good game plan. Despite the Eagles' recent losses, think of how tough the season would have been if they didn't have a playbook! For the past few months, the staff in the Office for Stewardship and Development has been hard at work on a Stewardship Toolkit for Parishes.

*The Toolkit is meant to serve as a kind of "playbook"* and resource guide to pastors and parishioners in implementing various Stewardship initiatives in their parishes. The kit acts as a custom guide to forming a Stewardship committee, provides background information on electronic giving, and even includes sample bulletin inserts on Stewardship. The Toolkit has everything an inquiring parish wants to know about Stewardship.



### Walking through the plays

While in draft form, many priests and parish councils reviewed the document and provided valuable feedback on the kit. One parish has already used it to help jump start a stewardship program. Looking to host a ministry fair? This resource guide has what you are looking for!



The Office for Stewardship and Development has no more important commitment than working to strengthen the parishes of the Archdiocese of Philadelphia. The documents in the Toolkit do not replace, but rather enhance the continuing guidance which OSD staff will provide in our parishes.

Just as no playbook can be useful without a coach, we hope you will consider this guide as a first step toward implementing or improving Stewardship in your parish. May it help us continue—parishes and diocese, laity, and priests—to renew the Church of Philadelphia. To request a copy of the Toolkit, email Stewardship at [shanley@adphila.org](mailto:shanley@adphila.org).

## Grant Ideas? Jen Kellogg can help.

Have you ever considered writing a grant proposal but become frustrated by the process? Maybe you know there is money out there for worthy projects like yours, but are unsure where or how to apply for it.



The Office for Stewardship and Development can help. Jen Kellogg, an experienced grant writer, serves as a resource to parishes in researching grant programs. She can also provide timely advice and information on funding opportunities, requirements, and procedures. Before joining the Archdiocese of Philadelphia in August, Jen worked as a grant writer at Door of Hope, a transitional housing facility for homeless families, in her hometown of Pasadena, California, and as a development associate at the Philadelphia Children's Foundation. Jen has already begun to establish relationships with several parishes and schools throughout the Archdiocese and has aided them in the grant research and proposal writing processes.

If you are interested in learning more about available grants and how to secure funding for future projects, please contact Jen at 215-587-5650 or [jkellogg@adphila.org](mailto:jkellogg@adphila.org). You can also follow her on Twitter [@phldevelopment](https://twitter.com/phldevelopment) where she will be tweeting daily grant writing tips and information about local and Catholic foundations.

## YOUR NEWS



I am so glad I went to this year's Catholic Life Congress. In fact, ten people from St. Helena's Church attended and everyone enjoyed themselves and learned something from the workshops. Archbishop Chaput gave a great homily and presided over a beautiful Mass in our magnificent Cathedral. -Msgr. Nicolo



## PROFILES IN STEWARDSHIP

### *On the Shoulders of Giants*

*Jerry Davis reflects on past examples, present values, and future hopes*

**G**erald “Jerry” Davis is a true example of Stewardship. A respected member of the business community, Jerry credits those who came before him as instrumental in his own growth and development. One example of Stewardship in his life was his father, who worked two jobs to support his ten children. Jerry said, “We were a large family but we were never poor or disadvantaged.” He also cites the priests at Saint James parish in West Philadelphia, who hired him to do various jobs around the rectory. “These men were my like my fathers,” he says, “I didn’t really have a choice then, but to try to be the best person I could be.”

Jerry took these values with him as he became a captain in the Marine Corps, where he served overseas for five years. He recalls, “That time abroad helped me realize that the place where I felt most comfortable was in the Church.”

“We all have to give back; we have all gained so much from the Church,” he explains. “Grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ,” he instructs, citing the First Letter of Peter, “For me, this means that we all have growing to do; we are all a work in progress.”

Jerry thinks the Archdiocese has a bright future, despite current challenges. First of all, he encourages everyone to pray for Archbishop Chaput and for each other. Beyond, that, Jerry takes a lesson from his experience working with ex-offenders, for whom little things made a huge difference.

Jerry recalls the words of Maya Angelou: “I’ve learned that people will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel.” Finally, Mr. Davis’ background in communications points the clearest way forward: “Lay people must take responsibility for our Church,” he insists. He believes lay people must speak more clearly in the public square about the Church’s efforts, “so that we can engage everyone in the good work that we do.”



### *The Parish as a Community*

*Getting to know the people of Saint Michael the Archangel Parish*

**F**or Father Mike DiIorio, Pastor of Saint Michael the Archangel Parish in Levittown, Stewardship is intimately connected with the mission of a parish. Father recalls a Church where he used to stop in to pray when he was young, where there was a Latin inscription above the altar: “Hic domus Dei et porta caelis,” meaning “The House of God and the Door of Heaven.”

For Father DiIorio, this is the dual role of a Parish Church: a setting to offer praise to God on earth and the community where believers gather together on the road to God. This mission, however, “requires that we have the resources that we need.” “We have parish activities,” says Father DiIorio, “most importantly Mass. But that pre-supposes that other things have been taken care of in the parish. All of these are only possible through parishioners’ contributions of time, talent, and treasure.”



Father DiIorio serves his parishioners with zeal. Every month, he holds his famous “Pastor’s Sunday,” during which all are welcome to stop in the Rectory throughout the afternoon and talk about—well, anything they want. “I enjoying getting to know my people,” he says, joyfully recounting his daily meetings with parishioners at the grocery store or doctor’s office, “They know me.” At the same time, No parish can function without its parishioners’ generosity with their gifts and resources. Father DiIorio sees his role as that of a conductor in a symphony, emphasizing that, “The laity must be in partnership with the pastor, much more than they have been. Because of the diversity of gifts needed to run a parish well, one person cannot do everything, as was expected in the past.” Thanks to the leadership of Father DiIorio, and the dedication of his parishioners, Saint Michael the Archangel remains a beacon of faith in Bucks County.