

Fr. Nick Dant's Homily, Saint Matthew Catholic Church, Indianapolis

Twenty-Sixth Sunday in Ordinary Time, Stewardship Appeal Weekend, Sept. 30, 2018

This weekend we kick off our annual parish stewardship appeal. Last year our stewardship appeal theme was "Answering the Call." We were remembering that Jesus calls each and every one of us to love and serve; to be good stewards of our time, talent, and treasure for the sake of others. As followers of Jesus we mainly answer His call to love and serve through our local faith family – our parish. This year with our appeal we build upon that theme of "Answering the Call." As we celebrate sixty years as a parish our stewardship theme for 2018 is "60 Years of Answering the Call to Love and Serve."

At first glance you may wonder what, if anything, do our scripture passages for this weekend say about the spirituality of stewardship. First of all, I believe all of scripture speaks to the spirituality of stewardship. Scripture calls us to be grateful for how God has blessed us, and being grateful to be good stewards of what He has blessed us with for the sake of others. When Jesus calls on us to take up our cross and follow him, he is calling on us to live lives where we give of ourselves to others.

Our Old Testament reading from numbers and our passage from Mark's gospel remind us that we, who are baptized, have all been given a share of the divine prophetic spirit. When Joshua told Moses to stop Eldad and Medad from prophesizing, because they were not at the tent with Moses when the Spirit came down upon the elder there, Moses said: "Would that the Lord might bestow his spirit on them all!" Jesus sadly expresses the same wish as Moses, when he tells John: "There is no one who performs a mighty deed in my name who can at the same time speak ill of me."

Through the Sacrament of Baptism we believe that the Holy Spirit has been placed upon us all. And what does the Spirit call us to? The Letter of James, our second reading, provides the answer: we are called to be good stewards, and not be selfish with what God has blessed us with. People are in need, both spiritually and bodily, and they need us to reach out to them in service.

For sixty years now St. Matthew Parish has been reaching out in service and love to others, and I am sure we want our tradition of Answering the Call to Love and Serve to continue, and even to grow!

1. Consider how for sixty years our parish has served numbers of people who have worshipped and celebrated the sacraments: the baptism, the Professions of Faiths, the First Communions, the Confirmations, the marriages, and the Christian burials.
2. Consider our communion ministry to the homebound over the years where many are able to receive communion on a weekly basis.
3. St. Matthew's commitment to Catholic education is second to none. Our school enrolls over 370 students, and think of the countless lives of young people St. Matthew has touched. We provide Sunday Faith Formation for the young also, and Vacation Bible School during the summer. Our sacramental prep programs for baptism, First Communion, Confirmation, and marriage have helped so many to develop in their faith. With Cari Weibel as our Youth Minister, our Youth Ministry Program helps our teens keep connected to the faith and parish.

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4. Many adults have been enriched in their faith journeys through our RCIA program for bringing adults into the Church, through our ever-popular adult Bible Study programs, through our men's and women's retreats, and our parish missions!
5. St. Matthew does tremendous outreach to help those in need through St. Vincent de Paul with its assistance with clothing, food, utilities, and gas. Our twinning program with St. Isidore in Haiti has brought hope to the lives of both the young and adults through their school and parish programs. I am always amazed at the response of support we so generously give to Dr. Ellen Einterz's medical mission in Cameroon, Africa. And let us not forget the Christmas Giving Tree program, and the tremendous good done by our Harvest for the Hungry Garden, and the many volunteers who spend countless hours to make that garden productive.
6. Our Respect Life Committee is very active in striving to raise our consciousness for respect for all human life with their fill-the-crib program throughout this past summer.

There is so much good that is happening here at St. Matthew, and it is all due to your generosity, and it also flows from your prayers and celebration of the Sunday Eucharist. In light of Jesus' call to love and serve, I am asking each household to pray about increasing your offertory gift to our parish.

Commitment weekend for our "Answering the Call" stewardship appeal is Oct. 20-21. This week, in the mail you will be receiving a letter from me, our annual stewardship report, and our stewardship intention card. Please look everything over and consider how you might increase your offering to St. Matthew. On Commitment weekend, Oct. 20-21, we ask you to bring your completed stewardship intention card to Mass.

Finally, I want to thank you for all your generosity and the sacrifices you have made through your help to make St. Matthew the wonderful parish it is. I am deeply grateful and humbled to be your pastor. Let us give God thanks for all the blessings he has showered on us, and give God thanks for all the future blessings he will give us.