

# Stewardship

## Networking Group Greater Houston Area

“Stewardship of Strengths” was the topic for our March Stewardship Networking Group gathering which was hosted by Mary Queen parish in Friendswood Tx. Fr Jim started our meeting with prayer. Marianita Snodgrass, a certified Strengths Coach, was our presenter and talked about how Living your Strengths helps people affirm their gifts and use them to enrich their parishes. A big “thank you” to Carla Martin and her Stewardship team for the gracious hospitality. Below are notes from the gathering.

Even in a country as religious as the U.S., many people feel disengaged from their faith communities. More than half report that they really don't get the opportunity in their Parish to do what they do best. People just feel disconnected and not satisfied with what they are doing.

Sometimes it's because those faith communities make unwitting missteps: Shy people asked to be Greeters or we recruit innately disorganized people to coordinate church events or sometimes people step forward because there was a desperate need, but it's not something they really want to do.. If Parish leaders can identify members' strengths and assign tasks in harmony with those traits, they will enjoy a greater sense of connection to the faith community and satisfaction using their gifts and will likely do a better job.

*Living Your Strengths* shows people how to use their innate gifts to enrich their parish. It teaches you to identify and affirm your talents, and how to use them for growth and service. Every church member plays a role in energizing and shaping the church. *Living Your Strengths* can help you find your role -- and, most importantly, it will inspire you to discover your true calling.

In addition, it can help you work better with team members, committees and groups as it helps you identify and recognize the strengths in others and how they respond best.

Living Your Strengths works best if it's supported from top down (Pastor, staff, etc.) Marianita Snodgrass, our presenter, is available to talk to you about using the Living Your Strengths assessment with your parish; she can also provide coaching and support. Contact Stewardship Group for her information.

Our Archdiocese recently offered a Galveston-Houston Profession Growth Day and the presenter was Sherry Weddell. Sherry gave an enthusiastic presentation on how personal faith can lead to fruitful discipleship, as well as, parish fruitfulness. Part of her presentation included:

The three stages of Adult Christian Development and our challenges to journey from seekers, to disciples to true apostles who follow Jesus unconditionally. How the Sacred Liturgy ... must be preceded by evangelization, faith and conversion. It can then produce its fruits in the lives of the faithful. Walking through the process of Charisms, the rewards include, Disciples began to bear fruit and become responsible for the Mission of the Church.

Sherry has several books including “Fruitful Discipleships” and <https://siena.org/forming-intentional-disciples>.

### Stewardship Networking Group “CALENDAR FOR 2019”

May 9th: Spirituality of Stewardship - presenter

Tony Oltremari, location: St Ignatius - Spring Tx

July: Saturday Seminar—Speaker and location TBD

Sept 12th: Young Adults—Invitation to Parish Leadership

St. Bartholomew Catholic Church

Nov. 14th Roundtable: Best Practices & Best of ICSC & plan calendar for 2020. St. Bernadette Catholic Church.

#### Mark your calendar NOW:

**Webinar series starts 1/24/19:** Building a Vibrant Parish—**12 part series**, building blocks and best practices to create a vibrant parish. [4ipi.com/webinar-series](http://4ipi.com/webinar-series). **This is an on-going webinar and next one will be 4/25/19, previous webinars available on their site.**

#### Annual Conference of the International Catholic Stewardship Council

October 6 – 9, 2019 Sheraton Grand Chicago Hotel  
Chicago, Illinois

The Diocese of Wichita, Ks, recognized as the founders of teaching Stewardship As A Way of Life has written a manual which identifies important building blocks within, under and around “pillars” of stewardship to assure there is a sound structure in place. Today we will address Hospitality as the first pillar.

“when I was a stranger you welcomed me” (Mt 25:35). In a hospitable parish, parishioners feel they belong and are appreciated. Building up or maintaining your parish hospitality and welcoming must be in all areas of parish life, from the Mass greeting, social events, parish meetings, and every other event that takes place in the parish. It can include the following:

**Pastor:** can create opportunities by greeting parishioners before/after Mass, special events, helps become acquainted with one another. The Pastor can hold monthly/quarterly socials with different groups in the parish as a meet-greet and listening to needs/concerns.

**Invitation:** Whether for new or long standing members, parishioners need to be personally invited/called by name to participate. While our website, bulletin and other forms of announcements offer invitations the proven form of invitation is the “personal invite”. Updated pictorial directories help with knowing one another and names.

**Communication:** Consistent, continual, updated, friendly and clear updated communication of all parish events is vitally important to foster hospitality. When people believe they are informed, they experience that sense of belonging. A lack of parish communication makes people feel disconnected. & more:

**Parish Office and Staff:** Many times the parish office is the first stop for new parishioners and a place for existing parishioner to obtain resources. Being welcomed by a friendly smile, given correct updated information or referred to the staff/ministry leader with phone number or email goes a long way in assisting people.

**Welcoming the New Parishioner:** A crucial part of building up the parish is having an organized event to welcome the newly registered parishioner. The event can include a hospitality committee/staff, a short welcome from Pastor/Deacon, providing information on your Parish Mission,

**Join the Stewardship Networking Group!** meetings are held the 2nd Thursday of the month; every other month from 10:00—12:00. You are invited to participate in a forum for idea sharing on all issues related to stewardship. For more information about this grassroots group in the Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston and to get on our email list, please contact Coni Perez at [coniperez@sbcglobal.net](mailto:coniperez@sbcglobal.net) or Suzanne Staron at [starons@stbchurch.org](mailto:starons@stbchurch.org). Spread the word, bring a friend!