

State of the Parish October 2011

This weekend is our annual State of the Parish Report and I, along with Kris McGivney; the head of our Parish Finance Council, will be talking at all of the masses.

It is not a time just to “uncover” our finances and measure our successes or failures based on dollars and cents.

No, it is a time to take stock of our relationship with and our commitment to our Lord Jesus Christ.

My life and ministry here, the life and ministry of St. Raphael Parish, and all that we are about is rooted in the Lord.

Jesus is the reason and purpose of our existence, personally and communally.

So I ask: How are YOU doing, personally?
Is Jesus at the center of YOUR life?
How are YOU doing, communally?
Does everything YOU do revolve around this fundamental relationship bound in grace and love?

When I mention the name -- Jesus,
What happens inside?
 What comes to mind?
 What happens deep in your heart?
 What “wells-up” in you?

We, each and everyone of us,
no matter how young or how old,
are called to discipleship through
an active and meaningful relationship
with Jesus Christ.

We “touch the face of God”
in and through the Sacramental life here at St. Raphael.

In baptism we are given the life of Christ
and share in the grace and love of
His death and resurrection.

Jesus’ sacrificial presence
is made tangible to us
in the Eucharist in a profound and mysterious way.

Brokenness finds hope and strength
and lives are restored in Jesus
in the Sacrament of Reconciliation.

Two hearts are joined and become one
in Holy Matrimony
as Jesus takes a man and woman
and binds them together as one
in a love that is procreative.

The Sacrament of Confirmation
seals and affirms the Holy Spirit
active and alive in a person’s life.

The sick and suffering come to Jesus
for strength, healing, and encouragement
through the anointing of the Sick.

Holy orders is a life of service
to God and His Church.

In the life of our parish
Jesus is the foundation,
the cornerstone.

Stewardship is not merely about money.

Stewardship is primarily about discipleship:
our active and meaningful relationship
with our Lord Jesus.

This week you will be receiving
a special packet of information
to help you embrace
your life as a disciple of Jesus
as we begin our “Stewardship Renewal.”

This is a time for each and every one of us
to make a personal and communal
commitment of Time, Talent, and Treasure
to the Lord through our parish.

Our Stewardship Renewal is a time, above all,
to make God the number one priority in our lives.

We do this by giving Him the “first fruits”
of our time, talent, and treasure.

More than anything else,
this is a time of conversion of heart.

In the category of TIME ...
It is a time to make a commitment to
spending quality time with our God in prayer.

Prayer is the most important part
of being a disciple, a good steward.

It is in and through this relationship
that we discover over and over again
just how blessed we are,
just how loved we are,
by our good and gracious God.

When this relationship is strong and centered
we quite naturally and gratefully
place before Him our gifts to be used for Him
and the building up of His Kingdom here on earth.

In the category of TALENT ...
Our talents become the road-map of service
here at the parish and the wider community.

There are so many ways to be engaged
in the life of the parish.
Please either re-commit yourself to
your current ministries,
or sign up for new ones!

I hope and pray that every parishioner
will be active in at least one ministry.
Please join me and make it
a part of your prayer as well.

In the category of TREASURE ...
Please give what you can,
what you are able to give.

Pray about it.
Bring it to Jesus and prayerfully discern
what you can give and He will guide you.

What do I hope to achieve in addressing
an annual Stewardship Renewal?

First,
I hope that everyone benefits from it.

I hope each and every one of us discovers
a new joy that results from giving of self.

Second,
I hope it makes our parish and even stronger faith community.

When everyone in the parish
is making a concerted effort
to be disciples of Jesus
and complete His work on earth,
we can accomplish amazing things
in His most Holy Name.

This is a graced time for our parish.
It is truly a time of renewal –
For us individually and communally –
For our whole parish!

Please look for your Stewardship Packet in the mail,
and bring your commitment card with you to mass
two weeks from now on October 15-16th.

Please don't just give it to mom or dad and have
one of them fill it out.
Sit down as a family and review it and discuss it
with each other.
Your home church will be then united with our church here
and discipleship will truly be a way of life!

Let us lift our hearts to God in prayer in our efforts
that the Holy spirit will guide and direct us
in our journey of discipleship.

God bless you!