

WE are the Church, the People of God,
gathered under the special patronage
of Mary, the Immaculate Conception.

As Catholics of the Dardenne area in the Archdiocese
of St. Louis, in communion with the Bishops of Rome,
**we are called and chosen to proclaim the
Lord Jesus Christ through our lives.**

With joy we strive to fulfill our baptismal calling by
prayer and worship, teaching and sharing our faith,
serving others, and fostering unity in diversity.



S T E W A R D S H I P

**IMMACULATE CONCEPTION
OF DARDENNE CATHOLIC CHURCH**

I Found Something I Wasn't Looking for . . . Chris Smith

(In joining and serving in a ministry), I found something I wasn't looking for and really never expected. Whether I am standing up in front of 40 or so new Vincentians or I'm standing in the Fry House at 5:30-6:00 when the drive-through line is all the way back to the soccer fields, internally I experience a very profound sense of peace. . . . Now, will God give you the same internal sense of peace that He grants me if you decide to give some of your time or talents to any of our ministries? Well, you'll have to ask Him that yourself in prayer. Whether it is that or some other grace, God will give you what He knows you need during those times.

Have Courage. . . . Jon Seeds

*Coaching children to play a sport, wanting to help teach PSR to kids, or stepping out to assist the poor, homeless or the needy--all of this takes courage. I remember the first time that my oldest daughter and I helped at the Economy Inn homeless shelter. . . . I still remember a little boy and his mother living in their car, and it was his birthday. My daughter had won a prize. . . . and wanted to give her toy to the boy who likely wouldn't receive any presents on his birthday. *The joy she had in doing this, as well as, the courage was incredible.* I still think about that moment.*

So how do we overcome our fear, how do we step out of the boat? Remember when the disciples were in the boat, and Jesus started to approach them walking on the water? Matthew 14:27 tells the story that they thought they were seeing a ghost and cried out in fear. Then Jesus said, "Take courage, it is I. Do not be afraid." . . . The Psalms tell us, "If God is for us, who can be against us?" "Whom shall I fear?"

*So maybe you are thinking, "You don't need me". *The honest truth is we do need you. Can you imagine what ICD would be like if everyone gave an extra hour of their time? Or spent an hour at the Adoration Chapel? God can transform anything. We simply need to have the courage to pray about it and do it.**

My Prayer. . . . Tim and Tiffany Besse

1 Peter 4:10 says, "As each one has received a gift, use it to serve one another as good stewards of God's varied grace". This is the beauty of stewardship; to know that each of us has a gift to be shared so that each of us benefits from God's grace. As a family, we have come to know Christ more deeply, through the stewardship of others and by serving those around us. . . . *We knew that following God's lead was the only way we could discern His call for us. Thus, we began to serve others; trusting that God would sustain us. . . .* In our time of discernment and waiting, we were able to increase our giving, serve our parish, our parents, and our community by giving fully of ourselves. And perhaps the most powerful act we did was to pray for those around us, that they would be fulfilled, have their prayers answered, and be kept in God's care; you see prayer is one of the most powerful acts of stewardship we can do for one another as the Body of Christ. *Our prayer for all of us is that we embrace the gifts that God had given us and discern how to be good stewards for the Glory of God.*

Serving Others Changed my Perspective. . . . Stephanie Oetjen

My husband Scott and I have two children. Our daughter Perry is 12, and our son Benjamin is 10. We have been members of ICD for seven years. I went through RCIA here in 2011. As my personal connection to Christ strengthened, I began to understand that God doesn't want us to keep His gifts to ourselves, rather, he wants us to generously share our resources and abilities. I recognized that we all have weight to carry, and that it is pleasing to God when we share our strengths to raise up someone else's weakness. I made it a point to find ways I could get more of this feeling, this sense of accountability. *I began to seek out opportunities to be a responsible steward of all of God's gifts, to be responsible in how I treat these gifts and what I do with them. Recognizing that I was serving God when serving others changed my perspective on stewardship.*

I Knew that I Had to Do Something Different. . . . Dan Luigs

After getting married, I imagined that I would live happily ever after with two or three kids, tons of ICD friends, a close relationship with God, and lots of money. What really happened was that we worked all the time. . . . isolated ourselves with work and not much else. . . . A sudden job loss created a massive decrease in income, and I wasn't going to church. I didn't really know anyone at ICD except the Mueller family. Virtually nothing that I wanted for my life and family were working out the way I wanted. *I knew that I had to do something different.* I wasn't living up to the Great Commandment of loving God and loving neighbor, *and it was time to change.*

What I did . . .

The plan I came up with is that I would go to church each Sunday. . . . join a ministry . . . contribute each week. . . . listen to God. . . . pray. . . . build relationships. . . . share what I was doing with others. . . . thank God for what he has given me.

What God did . . .

Our marriage is stronger than ever, and we have two daughters. (*I love you so much Cori and Ollie and Emmy.*) Through CHRP, I developed close relationships with many. God put Mark Perry next to me at a Donut Sunday, and I took a new job that worked out beyond my wildest dreams. We have increased our charitable giving each year. God has put me in a position to share my faith story and help others with theirs. (*ACTS is coming up. You should go!*)

Being involved has kept people close to me that are going where I want to go. . . . In the end I would want God to say, "Well done good and faithful servant."

Ask God for direction and to have the Holy Spirit inspire you to take the next step.

How Would You Describe your Relationship with Jesus? . . . Eric Cornett

I was asked a question recently that made me really uneasy, but it shouldn't have. . . . In fact it kind of scared me, but it shouldn't have. The question was, "*How would you describe your relationship with Jesus up to this point in your life?*" Thankfully, the question was posed in a book and not in person because if the look on my face matched the feeling inside, I had guilty written all over. I'm not sure how or why . . . but it seems like there is this unwritten rule that we don't talk about that as Catholics. I grew up Catholic. . . . Truth is I've done little more than show up every Sunday--well most every Sunday.

Earlier this year at one Mass in the Chapel the focus was on the power and beauty of adoration. *I'd heard it a hundred times before but never responded, but this time I realized that just showing up every Sunday wasn't getting it done so I signed up for an hour every week.* Funniest thing happened after a few months. Prayer isn't quite as awkward. I now look forward to the hour.

We're all at different places in our journey and there are a lot of different ministries here to assist along the way. I've been a part of a faith sharing group of men that has strengthened my faith and brought more value and peace to my life and my marriage than my involvement in anything previous.

Find a group of people willing to join you in your journey. . . . a group willing to ask you the hard questions and challenge you to be better. Try sitting in a completely different section next time you come to Mass, or you could introduce yourself to someone you don't know after Mass. Maybe one of these ministries doesn't need you, maybe you need it. One thing I know you are being called to is furthering (or if you are like me) starting your relationship with the One who gave to us His time, His talent, and His treasure.

The quotes above are excerpts from testimonials of ICD parishioners who are members of the Stewardship Committee. They presented these testimonies here at ICD during Mass on September 22-23.

Loving Father,



You alone are the source of every good gift. We praise you for all your gifts to us, and we thank you for your generosity. Everything we have, and all that we are, comes from you. Help us to be grateful and responsible. You have called us to follow your son, Jesus. Send us your Holy Spirit to give us courage and wisdom to be faithful disciples. We commit ourselves to being good stewards. Help us to be grateful, accountable, generous and willing to give back with increase. Help us to make stewardship a way of life. We make this prayer through Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, now and forever.

Excerpt from the Vision Statement

We contribute to the parish community by sharing our God-given time, talent, and treasure generously within the parish; in turn, we each benefit beyond what these gifts could have accomplished on their own because the whole community is strengthened by the mutual sharing of gifts. . . .

Our challenge and opportunity as Catholic Christians is to make full use of the abundant gifts with which God has blessed us as individuals and as a parish community, beginning with the most fundamental gifts such as the gift of faith in God and the gift of life itself. In short, we are called to be stewards of the mysteries of God as a foundation to being stewards of our individual human talents, physical senses, and personal resources. . . .

Monsignor Ted