



Pastor's Corner

Stewardship: Volunteerism

September 17, 2017

Pope Saint John Paul the Great outlined a framework for a more systematic seminary formation of candidates for the Catholic priesthood. His framework was centered on what he calls the four pillars of priestly formation: Spiritual, Intellectual, Human, and Pastoral. In my own pastoral approach to religious education and faith formation since becoming your pastor, I have taken this model and applied it to all aspects of parish life, having come to the conclusion that what we really have here are four pillars of *Christian* formation, not just *priestly* formation.

Pastoral formation for the active and intentional disciple of Jesus Christ, therefore, is our focus for this week's Stewardship column. Each Catholic Christian (not just the priest or any of the other parish leaders) is called to put our Catholic Christian faith into practice. In much of his work and preaching, Pope Francis himself has placed great emphasis on our need to embrace anew our universal call to virtue and holiness of life, with particular regard to the Corporal and Spiritual Works of Mercy.

The Seven Corporal Works of Mercy are readily done in actual activities and ministries that our parishes already do. There is certainly no shortage of need for the ministries that we provide, nor is there a shortage on the part of the parish to want to engage in these ministries. The only shortage is the numbers of volunteers to make these ministry *ideas* into actual ministry *activities*.

Volunteers are who we need, and Catholic volunteerism is abundantly praiseworthy indeed. Dr. Rob McCann, director of Spokane Catholic Charities, has said on a number of occasions that he would rather have a volunteer than a donation any day of the week. It is so much easier to write a check, put it in the mail, and then call it a day than it is actually to invest our own personal selves into another person's life, especially when that other person is someone in need of a ministry that we, the parish, are trying to provide. Treasure is relatively easy to give; try Time or Talent sometime and find out how difficult (not to mention deeply personal) it really is!

And yet, volunteers are, as I say, who we need; and a renewed embrace of the spirit of volunteerism is what potential volunteers (that is, every parishioner of our parishes!) is precisely what is called for at this time. Make time this week, therefore, as individuals and as families, to pray and discern how you might volunteer to help make parish ministry *ideas* into actual parish ministry *activity*. And be sure to attend our Ministry Fair the weekend of September 30th/October 1st and find out what all our awesome parish already is doing for various works of service. Consult the parish bulletin or contact the parish office for more information about the parish Ministry Fair.

~ Fr. Lewis