



J.S. Paluch Company Inc.
Your Partner in Stewardship



Stewardship Stew
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TIME

Invitations to Prayer

Last Friday evening, I sat and listened to the dedication concert of the new seventy-rank organ at the Madonna della Strada Chapel at Loyola University in Chicago. On Saturday, eighty-five students were confirmed at my parish's 5:00 p.m. Mass. (Imagine the surprised look on the faces of those who forgot that confirmation was scheduled during the regular Saturday evening Mass.) I left Mass and headed to my thirty-year high school reunion. The high school as I knew it is closed now, but the all-girls school across the street bought the property and went co-ed. It was a multi-year reunion and only one other classmate of mine was there. The "girls" who graduated in the same year kindly invited us to sit at their table. On Sunday afternoon I went to hear a local community chorus present its fall concert. The group was formed by singers whose lives had been touched by breast cancer. Three days filled with music! Each event included prayer: prayers for organ builders and organists' feet, for the Holy Spirit to come down into the hearts of the confirmands, for deceased teachers and classmates, for patients and caregivers and families.

Advent will soon be upon us. Opportunities for prayer will fill December from the blessing of the Advent wreath, special Masses for our Lady of Guadalupe, and Advent Reconciliation Services to prayers to St. Fiacre for a parking space at the mall. The callers will begin asking, "What time is midnight Mass?" Others might ask if

there is an anticipated Mass on the Second Sunday of Advent for the feast of the Immaculate Conception or if the Sunday evening Mass "counts for both." How will you invite the faithful to come and pray? Here are a few suggestions. Include an "Advent & Christmas Mass & Prayer Schedule" in your bulletin on November 23. Keep the bulletin handy for visiting family members who will be at Thanksgiving Day Mass. E-mail the schedule to your parish members. Post it on the home page of your parish Web site. Include it in the parish's voice mail system. You might even make it the outgoing message so visitors don't have to go through the usual navigation of your phone system. Use your desktop publishing software to create an attractive flyer and send it home with the school and religious education students. The flyer can even be brought to a local printer and made into a poster for your church, parish office, and school entryways. Contact your local community newspaper and find out how to have it included in the paper's community events section. Send it to your neighboring Catholic churches and ask for their schedule in return. It's always good to be able to refer a caller to another reconciliation service if they have missed yours. Lastly, assign several people to take pictures, when appropriate, at your Advent and Christmas events. The photos will make next year's calendar of events more interesting.

TALENT

Invitations to Participate

My parents grew up during the Great Depression. As a kid, I remember the full chest freezer in the basement and the shelves my dad built to hold a month's worth of canned goods. With seven children, we always needed to have a lot of food on hand. My dad once came up from the basement and exclaimed to Mom, "Now I know why we don't have any money. You have it tied up in stock." This idea of having plenty of food on hand has stuck with my sisters and me. We all have freezers and a second refrigerator in our basements. I usually have at least two pounds of every pasta shape on hand, too. You never know when a party might happen. I am fortunate that I have never known hunger. As I surveyed my "stock" recently, I decided it was time to use up what was stored and to shop only for fresh fruits and vegetables until the freezer was empty and the pasta gone. It's been almost two months and I've rediscovered some favorite recipes and learned a few new ones. I even used the items on hand to teach a cooking class as a fund-raiser for our parish school.

How many of us have been storing up our talents? How many of us have been doing the same old things, afraid to try something new? Do we need new ingredients to spice things up at our parish? I served on my parish Environment and Art Committee for over ten years. In the end, I was running out of ideas; each season was running on auto-pilot. No new members joined because there was already a group—both of us—in place. Well, we both got burned out at the same time and "retired." The liturgy director plodded along without a consistent team for over a year. Like a Jubilee Year, the field lay fallow for a year until a new volunteer realized that he had the talent stored up and was ready to share it with the parish. Jim, the new Environment and Art team leader, was filled with fresh ideas and enthusiasm. He has

enjoyed using those talents and now also shares his gifts as a religious education board member, lector, and extraordinary minister of Communion. Sometimes we need to step back and allow others to step forward.

TREASURE

Invitations to Give Thanks

At this time of year I used to remind people of the great tax benefits of donating *appreciated* stocks to the parish. This year, a donor might have to have purchased a stock forty years ago to find one that has appreciated. It is worth noting to our parishioners that Congress has re-authorized legislation that allows donors to make charitable gifts from their IRA accounts. More information and other ways for parishioners to make planned gifts are at www.parishgift.org. This site is linked to the Archdiocese of Chicago Web site. It is well worth reading. Check with your diocesan planned giving offices to make sure you can offer the same giving opportunities in your diocese.

In the October 24, 2008 edition of *The Catholic Free Press*, the Catholic newspaper for the Diocese of Worcester, Massachusetts, Bishop Robert McManus recently wrote: "In these uncertain economic times the Church has to set an example of what it means to be generous but also be very deliberate about how we spend the temporal goods the people have given to us." For the complete story go to www.catholicfreepress.org.

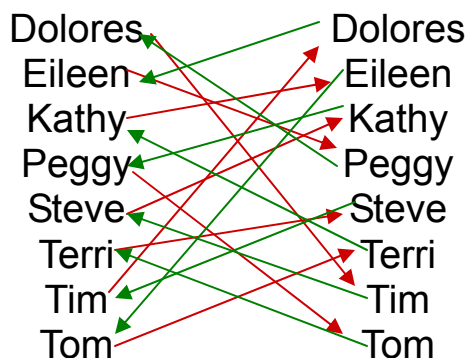
Several years ago, after I had presented the annual financial report at Mass, a friend stopped me to thank me for explaining the business aspects of the parish. She thought that the Sunday collection was given to other charities. She hadn't really thought that we had to pay for electricity, much less federal employment taxes, refuse hauling, etc. While we don't want to

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present a laundry list of “bills paid this week” in the bulletin, it is our responsibility to keep the parish members informed of our stewardship of their financial gifts. Aside from reporting the Sunday offering each week, make sure to include a monthly article about ways in which the parish office practices good stewardship of the parish’s funds. Stewardship teaches us that people need to give out of gratitude, not because the parish has a budgeted figure to meet each week. Until all parish members are giving with that sense of gratitude, that monthly update will help educate them on the actual financial needs of the parish.

Lastly, this Thanksgiving and Christmas let’s remember to acknowledge those who support our parishes. Be sure to send a thank-you to every business that advertises in your parish bulletin. We also need to support our bulletin advertisers with our patronage. If your parish hosts a Christmas luncheon for the staff, teachers, or any group within the parish, make sure you use a caterer or restaurant that advertises in your bulletin. Let them know you appreciate their support.

And on a lighter note: Several months ago, when I was presenting a workshop in which my computer screen was projected on the wall, a few attendees noticed that I had quite a few favorite Web sites on my browser. For those who participate in office or family grab bags, this site helps you randomly pick names for gift giving. It even allows you to set criteria for the draw. It’s <http://namedrawing.com/>. Have fun!



REGISTER NOW

On our customer secure Web site you will find materials to help you prepare weekly bulletins, prayer services, scripture studies, and more. With your paid subscription, you may also access *AIM Liturgy Resources magazine*, *Pastoral Patterns*, and *Palabras Pastorales*. Scripture based bulletin art for every Sunday of the year is included for our bulletin customers.

To register, go to www.jspaluch.com and select Customer Secure Web site. Enter your e-mail address, create a password, and you'll be all set.

ARCHIVED EDITIONS

Previous issues of *Stewardship Stew* are available in English and Spanish on the J S Paluch web site at www.jspaluch.com

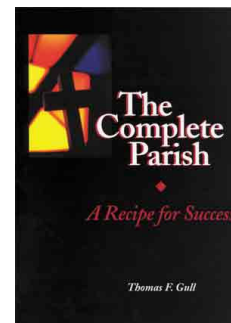
OUR MONTHLY CONTEST

Send us a description of a stewardship activity in your parish. Each month, we will select one as the stewardship Idea of the Month and send a copy of *The Complete Parish: A Recipe for Success* to the winner. Submit your entry to

Tom_Gull@jspaluch.com

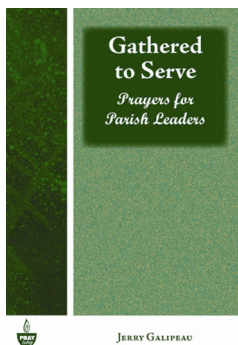
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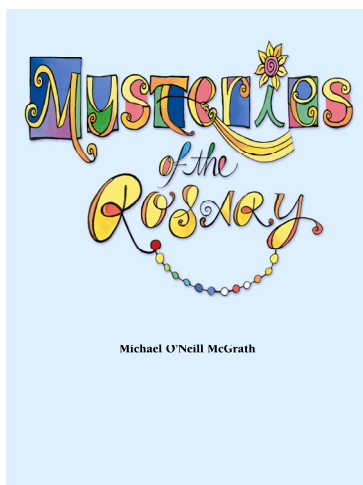


GATHERED TO SERVE

Gathered to Serve is a much-needed spiritual resource for anyone in parish leadership. Inside are eighty prayers that can be used whenever parish leaders gather to do the work of the parish. These thoughtful and thought-provoking prayers are centered on the seasons of the liturgical year, major events in parish life, and the popular *Prayer Services for Parish Life*, this book will be a welcome addition to the bookshelves and meeting tables of parish ministers and leaders everywhere.

\$6 WLP 017350

MYSTERIES OF THE ROSARY



This new book for children is about holy mysteries and stories from the lives of Jesus and Mary that help us to pray. Brother Mickey's artwork brings to life the Joyful, Luminous, Sorrowful, and Glorious Mysteries of the rosary through his signature use of vibrant, multicultural colors, symbols, and imagery. Scripture references are provided with each piece of art and an appendix of discussion questions is included for faith-sharing across generations. A true treasure for moms and dads, grandparents and godparents, teachers, catechists, and children of all ages!

\$16.99 WLP 017344