

Hi - my name is Sue Sylvester, and I am one of the Stewardship team here in our parish.

My focus is: Time and Talents. Before I move onto Time and Talents, I would like to dwell on Stewardship. A new programme for us, a new phrase: "the Stewardship way of Life"and yet it goes back to Old Testament times.

Colossians 3:23 - Whatever you do, work heartily, as for the Lord and not for men.

Corinthians 4:2 - Moreover, it is required of stewards that they be found trustworthy.

Galatians 6:10 - So then, as we have opportunity, let us do good to everyone, and especially to those who are of the household of faith.

1 Peter 4:10 - As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God's varied grace.

A steward is one who manages the possessions of another. We are all stewards of the resources, abilities and opportunities that God has entrusted to our care, and one day each one of us will be called to give an account for how we have managed what the Master has given us. (Bill Peel)

How do we, right now, translate this into our lives? How do we become stewards of our resources, abilities and opportunities? This is where your time and talents become so valuable.

In 1 Corinthians 12:27 St Paul writes: "The Church is the Body of Christ" When you allow the Spirit of God into your life and give holistically of yourself you will see that you are a part of this Body of Christ. You will realise that you have been purposefully positioned in the body to help carry out the necessary functions that will bring God glory. We each need to actively participate in our area of gifting and talents within this body of St. Joseph's to enable us to accomplish the plans of God.

It took me a long time to realise where God was leading me. What He was wanting of me. The thread that seemed to weave a pattern through my life was "community", and, over the years, God prompted me (and sometimes had to give me a hefty shove) - to use my talents to help build, or grow, or just be in community.

It's not always easy to follow God's leading - I have often had to press in really close to Him to be brave enough... but for me, disobedience to the prompting of the Spirit is far worse than the fear of putting myself out there.

As parish, we have faced many challenges over the past months. Challenges - hurts - loss - anger - betrayal - all sorts of emotions have rampaged through our community. I would hope that the very fact that you are here (spoken to a congregation at Mass) means that you know to follow God, rather than man. That God never lets you down. His love is faithful and steadfast.

He challenges us - you see Jesus challenging people constantly throughout the New Testament and I challenge you today to really turn to God, to press close to Him - to confess and ask forgiveness for any wasting of your time and talents or any misuse of your talents and to truly dig deep and seek guidance as to how He wants you to grow within His body. How He prompts you towards a particular ministry.

It will be through allowing yourself to submit totally to God that you will become instrumental in building and strengthening anew this Body of Christ. This community of St. Joseph's.

The stewardship way of life is a very helpful way to make our faith come alive. A way of life that I am sure many of you already follow.

The ministries needing your involvement are: Administration, Maintenance, Communications, Formation, Pastoral and Liturgical - Reflect and pray for guidance as to how God may use you in any of these or other areas of parish life. Allow the Spirit to breathe a new life and a new energy into all that you do.

C.S. Lewis wrote: "Every faculty you have, your power of thinking or of moving your limbs from moment to moment, is given you by God. If you devoted every moment of your whole life exclusively to His service, you could not give Him anything that was not in a sense His own already." ...but let's try! Let's try devoting our time and our talents to His service. I urge you to step forward and live the stewardship way of life - let's work side by side, get to know one another, help one another, support one another - and have fun together! Thank You.

Stewardship Testimony by The Paul Family - 10th October 2015

Good evening my beloved brothers and sisters in Christ. My name is Lloyd Paul and with me is my family, my wife, Shamain (not going to mention her age...), my son, Blaine, who is 21 and currently in his 3rd year of studies towards his BComm degree, and my daughter Caitlin, who is in grade 10, 15 but she says technically 16 – you try and make sense of that.

We have been attending St Joseph's parish since 2005. This evening, we have been asked to speak on stewardship. Stewardship refers to the giving of time, talent and treasure. It is about giving back to God and being grateful for the many blessings He has bestowed upon us.

1 Peter 4:10

As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God's varied grace.

In my earlier years at St Josephs, I did not get involved in anything in the parish. I considered myself a "regular" weekend "church-goer", if that's what I could call it.

My children have been altar servers since 2006. Blaine has also attended ACTS and served on team for two years. He is also Minister of the Eucharist. My wife, Shamain is a Minister of the Eucharist, serves at the retirement home, attended ACTS and served on team and has been on the Alpha team.

Due to my past, I did not feel that I was worthy to get involved with anything in the parish. I felt that our weekly and monthly financial contributions were enough. After some convincing by my dear wife, I slowly started assisting the Ministers of Hospitality. We, as a family also got involved in a weekly Rosary group.

In 2013, I attended Alpha and ACTS, and I believe that is when God started calling me. I felt, for the first time, the Power of the Holy Spirit working in me. My whole life started to change. I felt the healing in me and a hunger to start doing things for God, and not for myself – placing Him, who has all Power, above everything else.

I got involved with bringing the ACTS Mission into the parish and serve on the St Josephs Pioneer Group. I am now serving on Team for the second time with my son. I was called to serve on team with Alpha, am a Minister of Hospitality and of the Word, and a member of the Men's Ministry.

Getting involved with the healing masses / services and assisting with extractions of evil / bad spirits from people / homes and calling on the Holy Spirit, really showed me the Power of God, working through others and myself.

This is what we want to do – serve our God. What better way is there than to give of our time, talent and treasure.

Matthew 10:8

Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse lepers, cast out demons. You received without paying; give without pay.

I say this with all humility, my family and I spend a get deal of time at the parish, or getting involved in our various services and dedication. Many people ask us whether we have a life – our answer is simple, YES, our life is with, and for God.

When God calls, for me, the answer is simple, YES LORD, here I am.

There is no better way to bring a family together, than service together. Today, as the spiritual head of my home, I have to lead by example - (not going to say who is the head of the home, as the kids know, Shamain is the boss). There is no better feeling a father gets when he sees his children setting aside time daily to pray, read the bible, as well as look forward to attend mass and serve.

It is time to give back, are you ready to say Yes Lord, here I am.

PAT HARDING TESTIMONY - 7.00am 20th Sept.

Good morning my name is Pat Harding and I am part of St Joseph's Outreach.

When I was asked to talk on my Stewardship in our Parish I thought 'Why me Lord' what scriptures am I to use and then I decided to speak from my heart.

Throughout the Bible there are a lot of 40 days. Lent comes and we embrace our 40 days. As Catholic Christians, we read the Gospels, the Acts, and letters of the Apostles, the majority of us don't memorize the Word. The Word should be alive in our hands a constant sharing of the Acts of the Apostles.

Blessed Mother Teresa said:

Be the living expression of Gods Kindness:

Kindnesses in your face,

Kindness in your eyes,

Kindness in your smile.

So my number for you is ONE

One Thursday a month to feed the destitute - those people who have less than us - to show love and compassion - as no one is too good for the meanest service.

Adopt A Child from St Theresa's Children's Home. The Joy you bring into that child's life as he has a gift and party for himself and his 'family' in his cottage is a Blessing from God.

Donate a gift and party treats for the big three month party at St Theresa's, better still come and be part of it be involved.

Norman Vincent Peale said:

You can increase your happiness by simply adding to the number of times you perform an act of kindness.

When we believe in Christ, live in Christ love and good works should flow from us, His good influence should rub off on us.

September is the month you can make a difference in our Parish. Stewardship is not only about financial contribution, but a time to give of ONES time and talent.

So how is God's influence going to work in you?

TAMIN & DENZIL SIMMER
SUNDAY 8.30AM - 20TH SEPTEMBER
TESTIMONY

Good morning to our extended family, you the parishioners of St Josephs. My name is Tamin Simmer and this is my Husband Denzil. We have been invited to give a brief reflection on what stewardship means for us as a couple, both in our marriage and in our individual lives, and ultimately in our relationship with our Lord and Saviour. We have both been parishioners of this Parish for many years and it was right here in the parish that we met and celebrated the sacrament of marriage. We are both involved in various ministry's here in the parish. Catechism, feeding the destitute, ministry of hospitality, the word and the Eucharist, and only being a phone call away if help is needed, from helping with fixing and beautifying the church to standing up here and speaking to you today. All this we feel, our response to the love, grace and mercy that the Lord has blessed us with today, and that we know in faith, He will continue to do. Being a steward and participating in ministry here in our parish is very important for Denzil and I. Stewardship for us is about solidarity. It is a way of life that keeps us together and keeps us united with our church. The church and our involvement in the Church has formed the foundation of our relationship. Growing in the faith together and continuing to be active in the church continues to grow our love for each other and our love for the Lord. It is for us, part of the vows that we took, in acknowledging that there are three persons in our marriage, Denzil, Myself and the Lord, as He continues to be a stronghold in our lives, and we find ourselves seated in the Lord through our acts of faith in response to His grace and mercy. Right here in the church we find opportunity to feed the hungry, give drink to the thirsty and clothe the poor, help the sick and frail. We also find the opportunity to proclaim the gospel as Jesus asked us to do, not only in our words but in our actions. For us it is a way of evangelising. As the song says, "They will know that we are Christians by our love." Finally we benefit through the great relationships we have built with many parishioners here at St Josephs, as well as many others from fellow parishes, truly an extension of our little family. We were told the other day, when we saw a fellow couple of our parish when out at dinner one evening, that we are truly blessed to know such wonderful people. Yes, we truly are. We are benefiting from each others' thoughts, likenesses, weaknesses, encouragements and most of all STRENGTHS, as we grow in love for Christ in our faith journey. In ending, in stewardship we give Him, all the power, and praise, and glorify his name, in answering His call. Part of our blessing, is to be a blessing to others. We encourage you, to also come and answer to his call to stewardship in praise and thanksgiving for His mercy and grace in your lives. There are many

opportunities for you to use your many talents to be a blessing to others. As reads in 1 Peter chapter 4 verses 10-11 - *Each one, as a good manager of God's different gifts, must use for the good of others the special gift he has received from God. Whoever preaches must preach God's messages; whoever serves must serve with the strength that God gives, so that in all things praise may be given to God through Jesus Christ, to whom belong glory and power forever and ever . Amen*

We thank you for your time and hope that our testimony may inspire you to joyfully answer the call to stewardship.

Thank you.

Testimony on Stewardship of Time & Talent

SUNDAY 5.30PM – 20TH SEPTEMBER 2015 – THE VITE FAMILY

Good evening everyone.

We came from a pre-dominantly Catholic country where 80% of the population are Catholic. Being born into this faith, our parents were our first Catechism teachers as they diligently took us with them to church. The schools we attended from primary grades until our university years are run by Catholic priests and nuns.

So when we came to South Africa in 2003, one of the first things we did was to look for a Catholic Church. Holy Trinity was the most convenient from where we were staying at the time and when we moved to Morningside in 2005, we also moved to St Joseph's.

Here is where our three children attended Catechism, received their First Sacrament of Reconciliation and Holy Eucharist. Van had her Confirmation last year and has been playing the pipe organ for 3 years now. Vinz attends Lifeteen, is an altar server and recently joined the Ministry of the Word. Our youngest, Verne, operates the overhead projector during the Saturday 5:30 pm Mass. My wife and myself are core members of Lifeteen and have been recently invited to the Eucharistic Ministry, Stewardship committee, and Junior Catechism. And one of the things we do as a family is assisting in the soup kitchen on Thursdays.

St Joseph's has been a place of celebration of wonderful happenings and our refuge during difficult times. Our faith may have gotten us through hardships but our extended families here continue to give us hope and kept us going.

Today, we encourage all of you to find the ministry or activity that calls to you and helps you to grow and strengthen you in your faith. Let us remember that help was given to Moses in his time of fatigue and shows the need for community in the living out of faith. The whole Israelite community grumbled against him for leading them into the desert where they could die of famine. But the Lord rained down bread from heaven in the mornings and quail in the evenings.

But most of all, let us be reminded of God's promise of prosperity to Israel through Malachi, "Return to me, and I will return to you. Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house. Test me in this, and see if I will not open the floodgates of heaven and pour out so much blessing that you will not have room enough for it. I will prevent pests from devouring your crops, and the vines in your fields will not cast their fruit. Then all the nations will call you blessed, for yours will be a delightful land."

Thank you for listening. We wish you many blessings. Again, we encourage you to pray and listen to God's word and we know, you too will find your way to becoming more involved here at our St. Joseph's Parish.