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**Profiles in Stewardship: Sharing the Gift of Life**

Contributed by Mary Olive.

With our semi-annual Blood Drive approaching on January 8<sup>th</sup>, we thought it appropriate to highlight a parishioner who has become a blood donor “regular”. There are so many generous people in the parish who donate at our blood drives each and every time in January and June. However, James Decker, doesn’t stop there. Jim knows how very valuable human blood is...there is just no substitute. In addition to donating at Our Lady of Mercy, Jim spends two hours every three weeks at the Long Island Blood Services Donor Center where he donates platelets, one of the components of whole blood. He began these donations on September 15, 1993 and hasn’t stopped since. Platelets cannot be harvested at local blood drives such as those we have at OLM since special machinery is required. When asked why he is so committed to this practice, he indicated that it gives him a good feeling knowing that he is helping others in need. He said that when he receives emails from Long Island Blood Services telling him that his platelets were given to a patient at one of the local hospitals, he knows he made a difference in someone’s life.



An active member of several parish ministries, and faithful blood and platelet donor, Jim Decker has found that Stewardship Spirituality is indeed a Way of life.

Jim was recently recognized by LI Blood Services for having made over 200 lifetime platelet donations to date, 211 to be exact. Jim truly practices stewardship by donating the very valuable treasure of his blood.

In addition to being a faithful blood and platelet donor, Jim volunteers his time and talent in numerous ways at Our Lady of Mercy. He is an Usher at Sunday Mass, an Extraordinary Minister of the Eucharist, and an active member of the Holy Name Society, the Joseph F. Lamb Knights of Columbus and the Our Lady of Mercy Prayer Group. Stewardship Spirituality truly is a way of life for Jim Decker, and are fortunate to have him as part of our parish family here at Our Lady of Mercy.

**Will you be at the Blood Drive?**

Sunday, January 8, 2012 is just around the corner, so don’t miss your chance to share the gift of life by donating blood. Come to the school cafeteria between 8:15 am – 2:00 pm, and you will come away with the good feeling of knowing what it is to be a good steward. Save a life – Be a blood donor!

In addition to blood donors, we need help with set up, take down and registering donors. Contact Joe or Mary Olive for more information.

**About Donations**

**Can I Donate?**

There are actually fewer limitations that you might think! Age is not a factor—as long as you are healthy. Taking medication? Most maintenance meds won’t exclude you, but NYBC has a list you can check to be sure. Go online to [www.nybloodcenter.org](http://www.nybloodcenter.org) for a complete checklist.

**So, Tell Me About Platelets**

During a platelet donation, 1/4 pint of your blood is drawn and passed through a cell-separating machine. The machine collects the platelets and safely returns the remaining blood components, along with saline, back to you.

Patients who need platelets include those undergoing chemotherapy, organ transplant or with weakened immune systems. A platelet dose from a single donor is beneficial since it reduces the patient’s exposures.



*“Nothing will be impossible for God. Mary said, ‘Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord, may it be done to me according to your word.’”*  
*- Luke 1:37-38*

***Stewardship Prayer***

Creator God,  
 Life is your gift to me.  
 Through Baptism,  
 you invite me to share the gift of my life  
 in service to others.  
 Be with me as I choose each day  
 to show your Presence in our world.  
 Give me the courage and generosity  
 to respond to your love, to your call.  
 I pray especially for those  
 who serve you in ministry  
 throughout the parishes of Long Island.  
 May we bring the Good News  
 to those in need.  
 Keep us close to you.  
 Open the minds and hearts  
 of many others  
 -- men, women, and young people --  
 that they may accept your challenge  
 to build the Kingdom in our parishes.  
 We ask this prayer through Christ  
 our Lord.  
 Amen.



***Accepting God's Call***

It is in the Annunciation, in Mary's fiat— "I am the servant of the Lord. Let it be done to me as you say"- that brought our Savior into the world. As the first disciple of Christ, Mary shows us that we must listen to and do God's will. *Prayer* and *action* therefore go hand in hand. As followers of Christ, we must make time to talk to and listen to Him in prayer.

Examining all that we do, or simply living in the light of our prayer is essential. Living with a heart open to God's will has enormous implications. Different people will realize that God calls them to different things. For a teen, it may mean resisting peer pressure to take part in drinking or unchaste activity. For the single adult, it could require offering personal time in service to the needy. A businessman may find that honesty and fairness requires a certain course of action. A married couple could realize that they should have another child. A frightened pregnant woman may understand that she needs to ask for help to resist the temptation of abortion. The sick person might have to accept his illness and join his suffering to that of Christ.

***Generous  
 and loving God,  
 Like your daughter  
 Mary, help me to  
 know and do your  
 will.  
 Grant me a grateful  
 heart and help me to  
 always pray as Mary  
 prayed:  
 My soul proclaims the  
 greatness of the Lord!***



*As part of our Ministry Renewal, 2012 families received Commitment cards. Have you returned your completed cards? Have you made your commitment to God and His Church—Our Church—Our Lady of Mercy.*

Doing God's will is not always easy. We usually have our own plans for our lives. It is good to have plans, but never at the expense of our growth in relationship with God. Like Mary, we must trust that God's will is the best for us and our world. Let's follow the example of Mary and call on her to help us open our hearts to say yes to God!

## *The Pillars of Stewardship: Service—Love in Action*

~Serena

*"Amen, I say to you, whatever you did to the least of my brothers, you did to me" (Matthew 25:40)*

While we may not view ourselves as saints, we too are called to such heroic service right within our own community. We have many service opportunities right here within our own parish. If you have the willingness to serve and take the initiative to find where you are needed, you will find that there is no end to those who truly need help.

As stewards, we are called to serve both within the Church and also for the wider society. As we contemplate where to use our gifts, we need to evaluate what we do best. We should never neglect the worship of God, but for many people our stewardship of talent means undertaking ministries in our community—perhaps beyond our parish family.

Service to our fellow person is a responsibility that we should take on naturally. We are all responsible, not only for ourselves, but for others as well. That is the essence of community. As mature adults, we willingly assume responsibility to apply our time and talent to help others and to help build the Kingdom of God.

Stewardship Spirituality helps a community of faith mature and renders the leadership of the parish responsible and accountable. After all, the parish belongs to the parishioners along with their priests. Ask yourself what you have to offer in terms of material and creative resources. And in support of your parish, join the workers in the Lord's vineyard. When we put our heart into it, it is a great way to use our time to tell God, "I love you, and I'm grateful for all You have given me."

*"God demands first of all  
the heart, and  
then the work."*

*- St. Vincent de Paul*

As we move into a new year, let us take time to plan and make stewardship of time and talent a part of our lifestyle and stewardship of treasure a part of our budget.

Your first responsibility is to take care of your needs and the needs of your family—not necessarily all their wants. In looking at what we need versus what we want, we end up placing material things and money in their proper perspective.

All too often, Stewardship Spirituality is presented only with Church support or charitable funding as the goal. This is too limiting: Stewardship Spirituality is a plan, method, practical means to grow as a disciple of Jesus Christ and a member of the His Church.

*"For your heart will always be where your riches are." (Matthew 6:21)*

***Belong More Deeply*** to Christ and His Church—Our Church—Our Lady of Mercy.

~ Information from *Catholic Stewardship*, Colleen Smith and *thecatholicsteward.com*

~**Learn more about Stewardship Spirituality each week in the OLM bulletin.**

**Merry Christmas & Blessings for the New Year**  
**—from the Stewardship Spirituality Team of OLM.!**

## Our Lady of Mercy eNewsletter— On Stewardship Spirituality



OUR LADY OF MERCY

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### OLM eNewsletter Staff:

Father Rich Kammerer, Managing Editor

Serena Perrotta, Editor & Contributing Writer

Look for us again, as we bring you stories of Stewardship Spirituality in our Parish Community.

Did you receive this from a friend? Do you know someone who would like to? Send us an email to sign up— find out what else you may be missing! Please direct all inquiries via email to [therectory@olmrcc.com](mailto:therectory@olmrcc.com).

## Who Do You Know?

Are you someone who likes to talk to people? Someone who likes to share a story? If you can spare two or three hours a month, you can help to write the Profiles in Stewardship. Not sure you want to write the story, but would like to tell it, we can talk about that, too!

Please share your gifts! Help to spread the good news of how the people of OLM are living Stewardship Spirituality. Who do you know that is living a stewardship life?

Email us at [therectory@olmrcc.com](mailto:therectory@olmrcc.com).

## On a Light Note...

The Back Pew - Jeff Larson



Being 3 **wiseMEN**, the journey to baby Jesus took longer than expected because they refused to stop and ask directions.

## Stewardship of Time

### Evening Prayer

Pause for one minute each night at 9PM and pray the Hail Mary. Join those who pray for the safety of the United States, our troops, our citizens and for a return to a Godly nation.

Reaching Out to God  
in our Need



## Ministry Spotlight: Caring for God's Church

Like Christ, we are foot washers (John 13:4) Our baptismal vows make service to our faith community at the larger secular community an obligation, not an option. Sacrificial service gives us the opportunity to behave like Christ by sharing our time, talent and treasure. Obedience to God through service makes our actions a loving gift to God and man. Or service makes Christ known and enables others to know Christ more deeply. Stewardship Spirituality teaches that service with our time, talent and treasure builds up His Kingdom. At OLM, it is our mission to serve one another through the Spiritual and Corporal Works of Mercy.

Some have found a way to serve God and his Church—its people and the place— through the very special ministry of Caring for God's Church. They are part of a team who contribute their diverse gifts to care for our church building, altar linens, vestments and sacred vessels. They ensure that the cleanliness and beauty of our church and that everything in it speaks of reverence for the Eucharist to the community gathered around the table of the Lord.

What a beautiful way to give praise and thanks to God! If you have one, two or three hours a week to share, contact Marion Rousselle or Mary Murray via the Rectory for more information. They have found a place where they can **Belong More Deeply** to Christ and His Church.—our Church. Is this where you belong?