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*In All You Do, Pray Without Ceasing (1 Thess. 5:17)*

**OLM Stewardship Spirituality Prayer Campaign**

*by Serena Perrotta*

"I am overwhelmed at the positive response. I'm not sure I can keep up. I'm not sure what to do next." I met Phil Roeske after mass on the Feast of the Immaculate Conception and he told me that in just 12 days, over 100 people had signed up for the Stewardship Spirituality Prayer Campaign. He is thrilled. Of course, his goal is to have 700 people praying one decade of the rosary each day.



***For a small investment of time, the rewards are infinite.***

Phil is passionate about prayer. He wants everyone to realize not just its power, but its beauty. "Can you imagine 700 people praying every day for *your* intentions. Think of that! How amazing is that? One decade of the rosary takes only about three minutes to say. The value of prayer is so great: there is nothing more powerful that we can do."

I thought of how we often pray alone and quietly. Even when we are together at mass, or for the Rosary after mass, we are still solitary in our thoughts and our prayers. The Stewardship Spirituality Rosary Campaign asks us to open our hearts to remember the needs of others as well as our own—and to give thanks for all God has given us.

***Prayer is a gift from God***

"Prayer, some say, moves the hand that moves the world. As Catholic Christians we are all called to be prayer warriors in one form or another. Our call to prayer goes deep within the roots of our faith and gives our journey purpose and hope. Prayer is the way in which we work with God and develop our relationship with him and to one another. It gives us peace of heart like nothing else is able to and opens our eyes wide to truths within ourselves and of one another." - Cheryl Dickow, from Catholic.net

***Reach Out—Join the OLM Stewardship Spirituality Prayer Campaign!***

Be a part of this special movement at OLM and find out what the power of prayer can do in your life. Join the nearly 200 parishioners who have now committed to pray one decade of the Rosary each day from now through Pentecost Sunday 2011. Be counted: Sign up using the form below, return it to the Rectory office, or place it in the collection basket. You can contact the Campaign Chairman, Phil (933-6888) with questions.

***Stewardship Spirituality Rosary Petitions:***

That Stewardship Spirituality takes root at OLM.

For all who are praying this intention, and

In thanksgiving for all God's graces and blessings on us, our families and our friends.



Intercessor Name: First \_\_\_\_\_ Last: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone # \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

(email and phone # are requested to allow us to provide you with updates and news)

*"Everyone must give according to what he has inwardly decided; not sadly, not grudgingly, for God loves a cheerful giver." (II Corinthians 9:7)*

### 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.



We are all stewards -- managers of the many gifts God has bestowed upon us. Our challenge as Christians is to make good use of those gifts. In our daily lives, we manage our family and work responsibilities. But to become occupied with these important matters to the exclusion of the need of others outside our home or work, is a mistake we could carry into eternity. The coming new year provides a good time to look at how blessed we are and to ask ourselves how we can say "thank you" to the Lord. (D of Ph)

As we begin a new year, let's 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 is presented only with the Church support or the funding of other charities as the goal. This is too limiting. Stewardship Spirituality is a plan, a method, a practical means to grow as a disciple of Jesus Christ and a member of the His Church (D of Ph)

*"Happiness lies more in giving than in receiving." (Acts 20:35)*

***Joy to the World,  
The Lord is Come!***

## Parish Outreach: Stewardship in Action

### Reaching Out To Those in Need

by Andrew Rula

To many parishioners, Parish Outreach is synonymous with the food pantry; they are the group that handles providing food to the needy of the parish community. And while to some extent that may be true, as the food pantry is a critical part of Outreach's mission, it is just one item on their extensive list of responsibilities.

Mary Ann Scott runs Parish Outreach, and the sheer number of organizations and services that she helps to manage is staggering. For example, in addition to the food pantry, she helps coordinate rental medical equipment (such as walkers, canes, crutches), and helps run Project Warmth – a group that provides assistance to those who can't afford home heating costs. She explained: "When the winter sets in, families who had been barely making it, all of a sudden, find themselves with a heating bill that they can't handle." Mary Ann is also integral to the operation of a number of senior services programs.

All of those tasks aid the community, but none of them are as visible to the public as our food pantry. In September, nearly 400 people were aided with gifts of food. In October, it was 553. 35 households were helped in the last week. Mary Ann said that these numbers have been on the rise lately. That's no surprise: with some people not able to work or working fewer hours, "People are having trouble making ends meet." Circumstances conspire to make the winter months especially difficult for many families. Heating costs, along with the extra costs of Christmas time, hit a lot of families hard.

To compensate for this increased demand, Parish Outreach steps up their game. They coordinate food drives with Apple Bank, Religious Education, Cactus Hair Salons, and a number of providers to ensure that the Pantry is always as full as possible. The annual Giving Tree project was underway early to ensure fullest participation. Parish Outreach is helping a number of groups with an 'adopt-a-family' program, to ensure children get some Christmas gifts.

I asked Mary Ann how we can help—what should we do first? While OLM has always been generous in volunteering, the work that needs doing here is simple. "Just grab one thing at the grocery store," Mary Ann explained. "If everyone in the Parish did that, then we'd have more than enough food. We don't need one person buying a huge amount, just everyone helping a little." Check the bulletin each week as there is a 'most needed list' for the pantry which you can look at before you go food shopping. For those who feel like they need to do more, Outreach usually has the greatest need for drivers. While they're usually alright stocking the shelves themselves, the problem comes with collecting and delivering the food.

Regardless of how we help, Parish Outreach remains one of OLM's most vital services. They organize and coordinate a monumental amount of critical aid for parish families. With Mary Ann Scott at the helm, they will continue to provide for the parish's most critical needs, and with our help, they will be able to do the best possible job they can.



### Helping Out:

*"Just grab one thing at the grocery store... If everyone in the Parish did that... just everyone helping a little... we'd have more than enough."*

### Thanksgiving Bounty

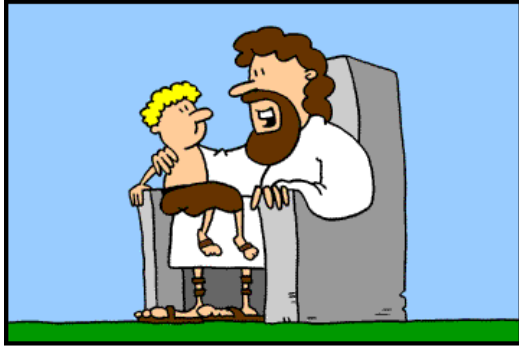
As a result of the generosity of our parish family and community, and the support of more than 10 different organizations and volunteer groups, Parish Outreach Services was able to provide 430 people from 131 households with Thanksgiving food this year, including 70 turkeys, 1 ham, and 150 food baskets/ boxes.

## Our Lady of Mercy eNewsletter

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516-931-4351

Know someone who isn't receiving this eNewsletter?  
Have them send us an email at: [therectory@olmrc.com](mailto:therectory@olmrc.com)

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Thanks to Christopher Huffman 12-24-1998  
HOW ABOUT IF INSTEAD OF GIVING YOU  
EVERYTHING THAT YOU THINK YOU WANT FOR  
CHRISTMAS I GIVE YOU WHAT YOU NEED?



OUR LADY OF MERCY

OLM eNewsletter Staff:

*Father Rich Kammerer, Managing Editor*

*Serena Perrotta, Editor*

*Andrew Rula, Reporter at Large*

*Look for us again next month as we bring you updates on the  
events and people in our parish community.*

*Please direct all inquiries via email to [therectory@olmrc.com](mailto:therectory@olmrc.com).*

***We're on the web! Visit us at:  
[www.OurLadyofMercy.org](http://www.OurLadyofMercy.org)***

## *Celebrating the Whole Christmas Season*

Excerpted from ***Our Sunday Visitor: Celebrating a Catholic Christmas***

We know as Catholics that Christmas isn't over on December 26th. Even just those first few days after Christmas invite us to continue to open our hearts to the Christ child and what he brings: There's the challenge of discipleship (St. Stephen, Dec. 26th), the beauty of the Word Made Flesh (St. John the Evangelist, Dec. 27th), the reality of opposition to Christ (the Holy Innocents, Dec. 28th) and the blessing of the family (Holy Family, the Sunday after Christmas).

January 1 is the beginning of a new calendar year, but that's not the reason we celebrate it as a feast. On the Catholic calendar, January 1 is both the Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God, and a day of prayer for peace. We make all sorts of resolutions for a new year, but alongside those efforts, we say a different sort of prayer. God has come to us, not in overwhelming power, but in humility as a child; so on this day, we pray that the new year might be marked by humility and peace, brought by Christ and modeled by Mary.

In the scope of the universal Church, past and present, the Christmas season actually has two endings.

In the old calendar, the Feast of the Presentation, on February 2<sup>nd</sup> marked the end of the Christmas season. On this day, also called Candlemas, candles are blessed as a symbol of Simeon's recognition of the infant Jesus as the light to the Gentiles, and as a way to bring the light of Christ home to burn all year. Even today, the Christmas tree and crèche in St. Peter's Square in Rome remain on display until Candlemas.

The Baptism of the Lord, celebrated the Sunday after Epiphany, commemorates the final Christmas feast of our present calendar. As we hear the Scriptural account of the Father revealing the divinity of Jesus at his baptism in the Jordan River, we celebrate our own baptism, our "new birth" in Christ and inclusion in his body, the Church.

For Catholics, December 25<sup>th</sup> is only the beginning of the celebration of Christmas. As others pack away the decorations, we continue to celebrate the gift of Christ, ever present for us in the Eucharist – a continual manifestation of God's loving care for us all year long.