



Profiles in Stewardship: Living Your Mission

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Last month we told you of Sr. Jeannine’s challenge for her 8th graders, and shared one student’s response. This month we give you **Amy Abraham’s** story. After considering a passage from Luke’s gospel (4:16-21) where Jesus speaks of his mission and goal, Amy has reflected its meaning for her life, and how she might be able to be Christ in her class, in her school, in her community and especially in her home. Her mission statement begins as Jesus began in Luke’s gospel.

“The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because He has anointed me to be a humble servant of the Lord, to share my talents with my neighbors, to spread peace and harmony, and to show God’s love for others through my kindness and compassion.”

I am moved with empathy whenever I see sorrow or misery and I always give the sorrowful person love and try to help them in any way. I love to serve God in any way I can. I know that he sacrificed his life for me and I am grateful for his unconditional love for me. My mission statement is to serve God and make others better and happier through my gifts and talents.

Serving the Lord has been a great blessing I have received in my life. I am an altar server and lector at church. When I am serving God, I feel his presence with me and I feel closer to Him. When I proclaim God’s Word, I understand that through my voice I am being a disciple of the Lord by spreading His message and teachings. When I altar serve, my actions are a form of reverence to the Lord. Outside of church, I serve the Lord just through my simple kind actions that show my discipleship to the Lord. This is truly a great and beautiful experience. When I get older, I plan to become a Eucharistic Minister and find more ways to serve God.

I not only serve God through the church, but I also show my service to him through my service to others. God has blessed me with countless gifts and talents. The gift of life has allowed me to show others the love of God and to represent his teachings. The gift of being born into a loving family has allowed me to see the great love of God. The gifts from the Holy Spirit which were given to me through Baptism and strengthened in Confirmation have enabled me to see with God’s eyes, stand up for my faith, develop a deep respect for God and the church, understand and learn beyond the facts and many more. My talent to sing has allowed me to sing praises to the Lord. Having a kind and compassionate heart has allowed me to put warmth into many people’s hearts. These are only some of my gifts and talents, but I know I could touch the hearts and minds of millions of souls and make a change with just these. For example, I believe in peace and non-violence. If I can stop a fight from happening, maybe it could change the whole world from disaster or even a war! This is the beauty of having talents and gifts.

Mother Teresa once said, “I am a little pencil in the hand of a writing God who is sending a love letter to the world.” This quote inspires me. I wish to be a little pencil of God, serving him and others. I haven’t found out exactly what God’s plan is for me, but when I do, I hope that I can be a servant for God and others and fulfill my mission statement.

Take Sr. Jeannine’s challenge and consider your own mission. Reflect on how you can be like Christ in your everyday life. To do so is to take another step in Stewardship Spirituality.

You have been born, baptized, and given special insights for a purpose. Consider what touches your heart—maybe your heart breaks every time you see a child who has been abused, or maybe you have a deep love for the environment and God’s creation. Perhaps you have a desire to enter public service or you’d like to volunteer in a soup kitchen. Your concerns, your heart’s desires, could be telling you something about God’s call for your life. Reflect and then write your own mission statement beginning as Jesus began: The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to...

Pray A Decade a Day
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.



“No man can serve to masters. He will either hate one and love the other or be attentive to one and despise the other.” *Matthew 6:24*

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.

Imposition of the Ashes

Turn away from sin
and
be faithful
to the Gospel



Just how important is it for children to be taught about stewardship spirituality? The earlier we can begin teaching them, the better.

We teach children while they are very young about Jesus, about prayer and about love. We take them to church every week. We help them understand the difference between their *needs* and their *wants*. These are all important parts of the Christian life.

Giving of ourselves is also an important part of our Christian life, and we need to start teaching our children the meaning of giving while they are young. Parents are encouraged to take a child along with them when they visit the homebound or people in nursing homes. At OLM, our religious education program and youth ministry groups provide opportunities for children to mail cards to sick parishioners or make food baskets for the poor. Parents can encourage children to return a percentage of their allowance or other income into the collection basket. More and more, parishes include a separate envelope for children of the family. And many parishes have stewardship commitment forms for parish youth as part of the annual stewardship spirituality renewal.

***Stewardship Spirituality is
an expression of our love for
God and for one another.***

What are You Giving to Christ this Lent?

Amazing Stewardship Comes from Amazing Grace—Fr. Dave Zimmer

- excerpted from www.theCatholicSteward.com

A feature film production based on the life of William Wilberforce titled **Amazing Grace** was released three years ago. It got its name from a real-life friendship between Wilberforce and John Newton, who wrote the words to that famous Christian hymn, "Amazing Grace." The film, however, told the story of one of the most amazing figures in British history. Mr. Wilberforce was born in 1759 in Hull, England, and in 1780 secured a seat in the House of Commons as a Member of Parliament. For over 20 years, he persisted in trying to end the slave trade in Britain. He persisted because his faith told him to do so, and it was right to do so.

Mr. Wilberforce believed that "one day we will have to give an account on how we lived and what we have done with what God has given to us." He was absolutely convinced that "we will be held accountable for our stewardship." This was written in 1797. It became an anthem for those seeking to live a moral life with "authentic" Christian ideals. Perhaps this indicates people have long desired to proclaim the value of the stewardship way of life.

At the end of his life, William wrote about those ideals in a book titled *Real Christianity*. His contemporaries described his work "a cry from the heart" – a plea for his fellow Britons to embrace what he called a vital – or authentic – Christianity. It influenced many great Americans, including Abraham Lincoln and Fredrick Douglas, to name only two.

This is the story of a man who lived his life of stewardship in a public way and wasn't afraid to stand up for what he believed. He challenged his country and the ethics and moral behavior of those who claimed to be Christian. He "rattled some cages" and "ruffled some feathers," all because he loved as any Christian should. There was no question that he was living the stewardship way of life. Is there any question we shouldn't be doing the same thing? And if not, why not?

We should frequently look for ways to improve our spiritual lives and our relationships with God. William Wilberforce was passionate about inviting people to an "authentic" Christianity. He had a passion for his faith and that was melded with his everyday life. He believed it is one thing to call yourself a Christian, and another to live your life as one. As a great orator in British Parliament in 1780 till a few days before his life ended, he maintained a desire to be authentic. He used the word "stewardship" as a way of life often, and believed he would be accountable for the way he used his time, talent and treasure.

Most of us will not ever have an opportunity to become a great orator in a parliamentary setting. However, we do have daily opportunities to live our lives as "authentic" Christians. We may never be famous or publish books about our beliefs and the positions we hold as sacred truths. But people will remember the examples we give by being authentic Christians. Are we not called to do so?

William Wilberforce was a voice crying out for change of heart, mind and soul. What is our voice saying this Easter season, as we celebrate the Resurrection of the Lord and the greatest gift given to all humans for all time? Our stewardship allows us to recognize that gift, and live life as passionate as a man who changed British history. It allows us to practice authentic Christianity by practicing authentic stewardship, quietly or boldly proclaiming, "The stewardship way of life is absolutely amazing!"



Reach Out:

“Rather than giving up candy or cake for Lent, give your time and your heart to Jesus in prayer and reflection.”



Daily Lenten Reflections

Beginning Ash Wednesday and ending on Easter Sunday, will be sent to all parishioners with email addresses. Pass it on, or ask others to sign up.

Our ashes remind us that we are dust and, eventually we will return to dust.

“Whoever wishes to be great among you will be your servant; whoever wishes to be first among you will be the slave of all. For the Son of Man did not come to be served but to serve and to give his life as a ransom for many.” **Mark 10:45**

Our Lady of Mercy eNewsletter

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Visit us on the web at www.OurLadyofMercy.org

On a Light Note:



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Email Address UPDATE!

We presently have email addresses for 1,000 out of 3700 registered families at OLM. If you do not receive the parish E-Newsletter or your family e-mail address recently changed, please fill out the card in your pew at mass. For those without email, please write NONE where the e-mail address goes. If you know someone who might like to sign up, bring them a card to fill out! We are asking every family in the parish to fill out a card. Thank you for your participation.



OUR LADY OF MERCY

OLM eNewsletter Staff:

Father Rich Kammerer, Managing Editor

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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@olmrcc.com.

Who Do You Know??

This eNewsletter focuses on Stewardship Spirituality in our lives and in our parish. Who do you know that is living a stewardship life? We would love to hear about it, so let us know.

Also, we are looking for a writer, a reporter, someone who would like to talk to their fellow parishioners and write the Profiles in Stewardship column to tell how people in our parish are living Stewardship Spirituality.

Please contact us at therectory@olmrcc.com.

On Real Love: An OLM LifeTeen Perspective

Love is a word that gets bandied about quite a lot in our culture. It's not uncommon to hear someone remark, "I love pizza" or "I love watching movies." It's also normal for someone to love their pet golden retriever or the family cat. It's certainly not extraordinary for two good friends to have love between them and naturally there is the love between family members. Finally there is the love between a man and a woman in which the utterance of that very word changes the course of their relationship. Love, it's the same word, but it is used in many different ways, so many contexts that it doesn't always have the same meaning. At least I hope no one loves pizza the same way they love their parents!

With so many different uses of the same word, it's no wonder love is a confusing subject! What does love really mean? That's what Life Teen's REAL LOVE FEBRUARY has been all about—finding the answer to one of life's most important and challenging questions.

Answering this question was one of the most important passions of Pope John Paul II's pontificate. His response came in the form of 135 audiences, or talks, on life, love, marriage, and human sexuality that have come to be known as the Theology of the Body. During February, Life Teen will be diving into this landmark teaching of our Church for the divine wisdom it can provide for young people seeking to live out chastity. Chastity is a misunderstood concept in our world. It's often thought of as simply a "no." According to the Church, however, chastity is a virtue in which one conforms their own will to God's and seeks the freedom to love as God loves, making for a holy and healthy life, in the physical and the spiritual sense. Pope John Paul II taught that so that we could come to understand how Jesus wanted us to live and respect one another. The path to marriage is indeed a holy calling and right for many, but following the path of chastity makes "more room to be anxious for the things of the Lord, to please the Lord and to work for the growth of His Church." Each has its place in our lives.

Life Night, our primary high school youth ministry gathering, and Magnify, our monthly holy hour for youth, featured this theme throughout the month, with each session building on the previous one. The Church has a beautiful understanding of what real love is, given to her by the God who is Love. Our teens deserve to know and understand this wonderful truth of our faith. - **by Nolan Reynolds**