

ST. PATRICK

CATHOLIC CHURCH



GET TO KNOW THE *Mitchell Family* Extending a *Positive* Stewardship Example

Participating in a parish community helps provide a sense of belonging. Justin Mitchell says being a parishioner here at St. Patrick's has brought him closer to other parishioners.

"As a fourth-generation member at St. Patrick's, I feel like I've gotten to meet so many people over the years and have grown close to many of them and have seen how much of a family we all are in our church," Justin says. "I feel like that deep relationship with each other and with Christ comes from our stewardship in our church. I feel like by being active in the church we are inviting others to do the same so that we can continue building our family in Christ."

Justin and his mother, Dianna, along with his sister, Kristin, are active members of our parish community.

"I first got involved in parish life when I started serving at the altar when I was about 7 or 8," Justin says. "I am currently an adult altar server at the 9 a.m. Sunday Mass and also assist Fr. Denzil as master of ceremonies on special occasions. I also teach altar server training classes."

Justin places importance on starting each day with a morning offering prayer and listens to the daily readings on his way to work. He struggles with the reality that other young people have fallen away from the Church, but says this means it's important to serve in the parish.



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"This is why stewardship and involvement in our parish community are so important, because it helps our youth see what is truly important in life," Justin says. "Our youth need to make Christ the center of their lives and we need to give them a strong foundation of faith that cannot be shaken by the secular world. What better way to do this than to get them involved in their church at a young age where they can grow together and build stronger relationships with their family in Christ?"

Seeing her son serve at the altar is a gift to Dianna. Her family has always been active at our parish and she's known many of her fellow parishioners for her whole life. Presently, Dianna is a member of the Catholic Daughters of America and the Rosary Makers group. She also assists with the pro-life group and Gabriel Project.

WEEKEND LITURGY:

Saturday: 5 p.m. (English), 7 p.m. (Spanish)

Sunday: 9 a.m. (English), 11 a.m. (Spanish),
5 p.m. (English)

First Saturday: 9 a.m. (English), 7 p.m. (Spanish)

VER AL DORSO
PARA ESPAÑOL



THE PRINCIPLES OF CATHOLIC SOCIAL TEACHING

What makes being Catholic, well, “Catholic”? Things like the Mass, the Rosary and the Seven Sacraments come to mind.

But there is also an element of Church teaching that’s often overlooked and sometimes misunderstood — Catholic Social Teaching.

Catholic Social Teaching guides Catholics on how to apply the faith to all aspects of life, and lays the framework for the Church’s teachings on the dignity and sacredness of human life.

Catholic Social Teaching can be explained with 10 key points. These 10 principles demonstrate the depth of the Church’s teaching on social justice, and they call Catholics to take an active role in shaping the world in which we live. Catholic Social Teaching, when taken to heart, can become the catalyst that causes positive change in a world that desperately needs it. Consider these principles and strive to apply them in your own life.

HUMAN DIGNITY

Human dignity is the fundamental principle within the Church’s teaching on social justice. A firm understanding of this principle is required so that the rest of Catholic Social Teaching can be viewed from the appropriate perspective. God created us in His image and likeness, so we all are worthy of respect.

RESPECT FOR HUMAN LIFE

Whether unborn or seconds away from death, no life deserves to be prematurely ended. The Church sees this principle as crucial to the health of any society.

ASSOCIATION

Association holds that social relationships must be developed so that all people may reach their fullest potential. The Church teaches that the family is the basic unit upon which all other elements of society rest. We must uphold the sacredness of the family, and foster the growth of other societal organizations that preserve the well-being of all people.

PARTICIPATION

All people deserve the right to work and to participate in God’s creation. The joy of accomplishing a task and performing honest labor should be made available to all people.

PROTECTION FOR THE POOR AND VULNERABLE

Society exists in a balance between those with power, and those without it. The vulnerable — those with disabilities — and the poor must be protected from those with power who choose to wield it in an unjust manner.

SOLIDARITY

“Love your neighbor as yourself” — this commandment extends beyond the boundaries of any town, state or country. The principle of solidarity encourages all people to reach out to their brothers and sisters in need and to help them, even if they live halfway around the world.

STEWARDSHIP

Everything we have — even our own lives — is a gift from God. Our talents, our time and our financial resources are not our own, but God’s. The same goes for the natural resources we so often take for granted.

RESPONSIBILITIES AND LIMITS OF GOVERNMENT

Governments, while created for the common good, sometimes overstep their boundaries. The Church teaches that all governments should seek to operate at the lowest level of organization possible — striving to solve problems at the source, with those who understand them best, and not through oppressive force.

HUMAN EQUALITY

God made all humans equal, including those of different ethnicity and race, and in different stages of life. No one person is of more value than another.

COMMON GOOD

It is especially important in our society to promote the common good — the social well-being and development of the “human group.” If we consider the entire human race as one family, the common good urges us to support our brothers and sisters so that they may reach their full potential.



A LETTER FROM OUR PASTOR

If Not Stewards, Then *What Are We?*

Dear Parishioners,

As a stewardship parish, it is important to ask how well we understand the message of stewardship that keeps surfacing in all we do in our personal life and the life of our parish. If not stewards, then what are we? If not disciples of Jesus Christ, then what purpose do we serve as members of His Holy Catholic Church? Aren't these intriguing questions for any believer? And if not, why aren't they?

God's goodness and the gifts given to each of us shouldn't be taken for granted and our lives should be motivated by our gratitude for all we have, including every opportunity that gives glory and honor to God. Those opportunities are given at each moment of each day. Wait for them and expect them to become obvious. The idea of being a steward of those gifts and opportunities isn't new to the realm of believers in the Old Testament or the New Testament. And certainly, the Gospels of Jesus Christ make it quite clear that our Lord views us to be the stewards He expects us to be. His stories and parables confirm it. So, if you cannot or will not see yourself as "that" steward He invites you to be, then what are you? I am curious about those who reject being that steward. I am even more curious about what they believe are the other options.

I am still in awe of the first line in the U.S. Bishops' pastoral letter, *Stewardship: A Disciple's Response*, that boldly states: "Once one has decided to be a disciple of Jesus Christ, stewardship is not an option." They were so convinced that



the stewardship way of life is a disciple's way of life. And yet, that is what we are and have always been.

"If not stewards, then what?" remains a challenging statement to invite us to reflect on what our Catholic faith is calling us to experience and participate in for the time we are given on this earth. It challenges us to face our reflection in the mirror of this life given to us by God and see what our Lord sees in us, and then embrace the opportunities being handed to us each day of our lives. Blessings and challenges await us, and no matter what the balance may be from day to day, our God equips us with all we need. He created us and sees us as stewards. Why

would we dare resist seeing ourselves in the way our God sees us?

Connecting stewardship and discipleship is inevitable in my book. For that matter, it is inevitable in the "Good Book," which we identify and recognize as the Word of God. It matters to our God what we do with the gifts He so generously gives to each of us. Why would it not matter to us? I ask you to take some time to refocus, reevaluate and re-commit yourself to the faithfulness of the life, the time, the talent, and the treasure you have been given.

We are the stewards of those precious gifts. What are we doing with them?

In Christ,

Fr. Denzil Vithanage, Pastor

Deacons Living out Vocation to Serve Our Church and Community

As Deacon Manuel Ramos puts it, a deacon's vocation is "one of service." Here at St. Patrick, our parish's six deacons serve our community in a variety of different ways.

The Church's first deacons make their first appearance in the Acts of the Apostles, as seven men chosen to serve the community. As the early Church grew, and the apostles assumed more and more work, it became necessary to bring in some extra help — hence, the establishment of the diaconate. Today, deacons are an important part of the clergy, along with priests and bishops. Men wishing to become deacons must be at least 35 years old and baptized, practicing Catholics, and the process to become a deacon takes about five years.

"In the first year, if we are married, they ask our wives to come with us to our formation so that they understand the responsibilities we will have and the jobs that we will be doing," Deacon Manuel says. "It's very important that they

be on board and understand the role of a deacon, and the compromises that we will need to make."

Deacon Manuel has been a deacon for nearly 23 years, and has enjoyed serving the parish alongside its other five deacons in many different ways.

"We are able to perform two sacraments — Baptism and Matrimony," Deacon Manuel says. "We also serve the community in many ways. We help with quinceañeras and funerals; we help prepare children to receive sacraments; we work with the youth; we lead Rosaries; we bless houses; we can help guide people who are having marital problems.

"There are many things that have brought me joy in my years as a deacon, but helping the priest at Mass is my one of my favorite parts," he adds. "I love being physically close to Christ in the Eucharist, and I enjoy being of service to the community and to God."

THE DEACONS OF ST. PATRICK

Deacon Abelino Cordero — ordained Aug. 7, 1999

Deacon Juan Mijares — ordained Aug. 7, 1999

Deacon Manuel Ramos — ordained Aug. 7, 1999

Deacon Rafael Landeros — ordained Dec. 22, 2007

Deacon Martin Aguilar — ordained Dec. 22, 2007

Deacon Ray Vann — ordained Dec. 22, 2007



THE MUSIC MINISTRY:

Blessed to Share in *Song, Prayer and Friendship*

For Charlotte Pruitt and Pat Powell, liturgical music has truly been a blessing in each of their lives since childhood.

Charlotte learned piano as a child and, at 15 years old, began playing organ for the church. Her love of music continued into a graduate education as a young adult and she taught music education for 29 years. She has been a member of the music ministry at St. Patrick's for 55 years.

Pat joined the choir 10 years later after Charlotte, with an inspiring 45 years of dedication to the music program here. These years have seen their friendship grow into something special.

"Our friendship is special because of our involvement in the Music Ministry," Pat says. "It is something that we share together and has seen us through many seasons of life."

"I don't know what I would do if I didn't have the Music Ministry at church," Charlotte says. "St. Augustine said,

'Singing is praying twice' and that is very much the way I feel about it."

The Music Ministry at St. Patrick's is very large and diverse. This diversity gives glory to God through all of the ways that different cultures worship Him through song.

"We have many different musical groups at the parish," Pat says. "Many of the groups have been together for a long time. The friendships have grown through their service and the time spent together. Music is so important and it has helped our whole parish grow. Our community is so rich with different cultures, so we have wonderful opportunities to learn about them and appreciate them."

The parishioners generously share their musical talents with the church. For special occasion Masses, there are special instruments as well.

"Fr. Denzil is so supportive of the Music Ministry," Pat says. "This has really helped the ministry grow. With so many

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Pat Powell



Pat Powell and Charlotte Pruitt

The Music Ministry *continued from page 5*

musically talented parishioners, we are so fortunate to have music at nearly every Mass.”

For these two talented musicians, their dedication to the Music Ministry at the parish has resulted in some special opportunities.

“When Pope John Paul II came to Texas in 1986, we were invited to go sing at the Mass in San Antonio,” Charlotte says. “Pat and I, along with two others from the parish, went up for that. It is one of the most special memories I have.”

“We used to travel to Tyler and gather there for special occasions and sing with the choir for the diocese,” Pat adds. “We have been so honored to be able to do this. We made many friends and thanks to the choir, we have gotten to do so many wonderful things.”



Charlotte Pruitt

Those interested in being a part of our active Music Ministry may contact Theresa Williamson at 936-635-0083.

The Mitchell Family *continued from front cover*

“St. Patrick Catholic Church is home to me and I feel I should do whatever I can to help our parish,” Dianna says.

Dianna began her involvement by playing guitar and singing at Mass when she was 14 years old. Currently, she sings with the school children at the Friday morning school Masses and serves as a cantor for our 5 p.m. Saturday Mass.

“I enjoy hearing the children sing and see them leading the Rosary, reading and playing instruments in hopes it will encourage them to continue to participate in the Mass into adulthood,” she says.



“Stewardship and involvement in our parish community are so important, because it helps our youth see what is truly important in life,” Justin says.

“Our youth need to make Christ the center of their lives and we need to give them a strong foundation of faith that cannot be shaken by the secular world. What better way to do this than to get them involved in their church at a young age where they can grow together and build stronger relationships with their family in Christ?” — JUSTIN MITCHELL