

Stewardship: A Disciple's Response

Ministry Spotlight: RCIA

Each September, St. Sebastian Parish welcomes a new class of candidates and catechumens, who are beginning a lifelong journey in faith formation. The parish's Rite of Christian Initiation for Adults (RCIA) team needs volunteers to help them get off to a great start.

RCIA is the formal program of education and self-discovery for individuals wishing to become Catholic. The current class consists of 13 candidates (those who have been baptized in the Catholic Church or another Christian denomination) and three catechumens (those who are not baptized). Recent classes have included teens as young as 12 and 13, a few individuals beginning their spiritual journey in their 70s, and adults of all ages in between.

The class members begin their weekly meetings at the 10 a.m. Mass (9 a.m., beginning in November). After the Liturgy of the Word, they leave Mass to discuss the liturgy, listen to guest speakers, and participate in other group activities.

"We need volunteers to assist with hospitality and serve as facilitators of our discussions of the Word," said Elaine Fechko, pastoral minister. "We also need sponsors willing to mentor our candidates and catechumens throughout the year." All of their hard work leads up to the Easter Vigil, where they will be baptized, confirmed and will receive the Holy Eucharist.

"The Easter Vigil may seem like the end of their education and the culmination of their commitment, but I tell them it is only the beginning," said Elaine.

No special training is required of those on the RCIA team - just parishioners who are willing to share their time and faith with others. According to Elaine, even high school students have served as sponsors to teen candidates and catechumens. If you would like to learn more about the RCIA team, contact Elaine at 330-836-2233, ext. 103 or via e-mail at Fechkoe@stsebastian.org

Stewardship Profile: Elaine Fechko

For many years, Elaine Fechko was a stay-at-home mother of four and, with her husband, Carl, an active member of St. Joseph's Catholic Church in Strongsville. A combination of factors – her love of parish work, her desire to grow spiritually, and a recognition of the leadership skills she learned from her father – led her to pursue her master of arts degree in pastoral ministry at Ursuline College. She graduated in 1996 and was then certified by the Cleveland Diocese.

Since then, she has taught high school theology and served as director of religious education at St. Leo's Catholic Church in Cleveland. As pastoral minister at St. Sebastian, she coordinates RCIA, the ministries to the sick and bereaved, and marriage preparation. Since joining the parish staff, she has been living the advice she has been giving her children, now young adults building careers: "I tell them to find work that gives meaning to their life and, when they do that, the paycheck will be besides the point."

Elaine said the best part of her job is sharing her love of the Catholic faith with others. "It's such a well-grounded faith – oriented to community and social justice," she said. "It has so much to offer and doesn't follow the fads of the day. It's 2,000 years of wisdom."

Words of Wisdom

Do not worry about tomorrow; for tomorrow will take care of itself. Each day has trouble enough of its own.

Matthew 6:34

These ministry profiles are being brought to you by the St. Sebastian Stewardship Committee. Would you like to share the story of your ministry? Contact David Tschantz at 330-864-0646 or dtschant@neo.rr.com, or Holly Pupino at 330-665-2248 or spupino@neo.rr.com.