

Stewardship: A Disciple's Response

Ministry Spotlight: Welcoming Committee

Do you remember the first Mass you attended at St. Sebastian? Did you feel welcome? Did a stranger say "Hello" and introduce himself or herself? How about last Sunday? Did you take the time to extend a hand, especially to an unfamiliar face?

To large extent, all members of the parish serve on the "Welcoming Committee." But a small group of men and women on this committee take welcoming the next step. They want to be sure new parishioners feel connected and part of church community from their first visit forward.

"On Oct. 20, we will have a potluck dinner in Zwisler Hall to welcome new parishioners who have registered in the last six months," said Virginia Scott, who heads up the Welcoming Committee. "All parishioners are invited and we hope to have a good turnout. The dinner begins at 6 p.m."

The committee holds the welcoming dinners twice a year and is also considering hosting coffees at parishioners' homes a few times a year.

When an individual, couple or family joins the church, the committee mails a handwritten letter, which is followed by a phone call. Arrangements are also made for new parishioners to be introduced at a Mass.

Scott believes the work of her committee is an important part of the church's mission – not only to spread of the word of God and attract new parishioners, but to keep them.

"I wanted to get involved with this ministry because I live outside of the church's geographic area – in Kenmore – and I knew I wouldn't be running into parishioners at Acme. I thought this would be a good way to meet more people. I think our church is attracting more and more parishioners from areas like Wadsworth and Stow so obviously we are doing a good job of making a good first impression."

Scott said the Welcoming Committee could use a few more ongoing, friendly people who

maybe have some fresh ideas on how to make the church even more welcoming. To get involved, call Scott at 330-745-0067 or e-mail her at verde@raex.com.

Stewardship Profile: Virginia Scott

Virginia Scott grew up in Rocky River, Ohio and attended St. Christopher Parish. Several years ago, when she began to "shop around" for a new parish, she immediately felt connected to St. Sebastian because the church reminded her of her childhood parish.

That was not the only connection though. At the end of Mass, she introduced herself to Father John McDonough, now pastor emeritus, and told him she thought he knew her father, Jack Sheil. Father McDonough told Virginia that he was very fond of her father and greatly admired him.

As a recovered alcoholic, Virginia's father was very involved in the local AA community. Virginia didn't realize it until later in life, but the "strangers" she met in her home as a child were people who relied upon her father as a sponsor. So "welcoming" and "reaching out" are skills she learned very early in life.

Virginia is married; Don is her husband. She is a paralegal and is currently working on a long-term contract with the Bridgestone/Firestone Company.

Thoughts on Giving

The man gave names to all the cattle, all the birds of the air, and all wild animals; but none proved to be the suitable partner for the man. – Genesis 2:20

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.
