

Church of the Precious Blood



Dear Parish Family Members and Friends

It is that time of the year to reflect on who we are as parish. We reflect on what essentially The Church of the Precious Blood is. We know that The Church of the Precious Blood is NOT a building although we have a beautiful one!

Years ago when The Church of the Epiphany in Brick was formed as a new parish they used various places to gather and worship for a number of years—schools, other churches, firehouses. And then finally, when they had enough money they built the building. They had (and may still have) a sign out front that said “*We are the Church of the Epiphany. This is where we put our building!*”

And so we reflect on all the things, activities, people, dreams, hopes and faith that make us all The Church of the Precious Blood.

We gather not only on weekends but in many ways throughout the week to be Church: to teach our young; to share faith in small groups; to serve the homeless as well as others in need; to gather socially and get to know one another better; to care for the property; to welcome and share the excitement of expectant parents; to give our youth an inspirational experience of Church.

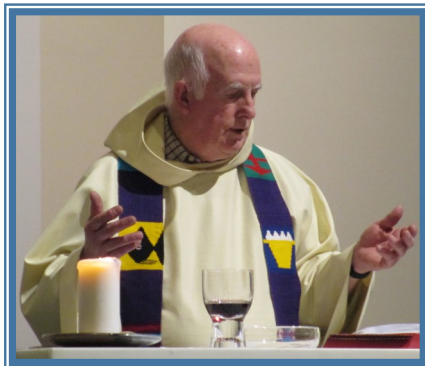
This year ahead we will stretch ourselves a little further to reach out to the poorest of the poor in Haiti. We will recognize that Church, who we are, has no boundary. We will learn from our sisters and brothers in that land and hopefully nourish them as they nourish us and our faith and our commitment to the Gospel.

Through our Faith Sharing Good News People Program, through our study of Matthew Kelly’s book, Rediscovering Catholicism, and in other ways we have reflected this past year on Discipleship—on the fact that we are not just “followers.” We are not only people who were baptized at the font years ago. We are not just people who fulfill our “obligation” to go to Mass. We are all disciples—people who share in Christ’s mission, in His forgiving, healing, nourishing ministry to build the Kingdom of God on earth as it is in heaven.

Let us continue to be the Church.

Peace

Fr. Bob



Stewardship
A way of living

Lord Jesus Christ, you call us to follow you as disciples. Help us to respond wholeheartedly and without counting the cost.

Lord Jesus, you invite us to proclaim your gospel of love, hope and salvation here at home and to all nations and peoples. Teach us to be energetic faithful evangelists in our word and in our actions.

Lord Jesus, you have given us every spiritual and material blessing. Show us how to share our gifts with others, and through the Holy Spirit inspire us always to follow your example of loving generous self-giving.

Most Gracious Lord, teach us to share our gifts with a joyous and grateful heart so we may inspire hope, provide consolation, and offer pastoral care to all your people, thus giving glory and honor to your holy name.

AMEN

We are *God's*
Helping Hands

Over 300 parishioners are providing more than 7,000 hours per year of their time and talents for supporting others' vital needs... within our Parish and through outreach to distant communities.

Faith Formation — Young People and Adults

- 32 Catechists plus 5 teen assistants
- 353 children in all classes
- 54 First Communion
- 48 Confirmed
- RCIA candidates — 9 in 2012... 3 in 2013
- Parents' Baptism Preparation — 28 in 2012... 38 in 2013
- 4 Committee members plus 20 volunteers

Youth Ministry

- 20 registered teens
 - Speaking at religious education programs
 - Support for Ronald McDonald House
 - Visits to Children's Hospital
 - Assisting victims of domestic and sexual violence
- 5 Committee members plus 15 volunteers

Spirituality and Community Life

- 600 copies of Rediscover Catholicism distributed
- One-day women's retreat — 26 participants
- Two-day women's' retreat — 28 participants
- Two-day men's retreat — 25 participants
- Monthly men's prayer group — 25 participants
- Monday morning faith-sharing — 15 participants
- Faith-sharing groups
 - 2011-12... 60 participants
 - 2012-13... 70 participants
 - 2013-14... 90 participants (**Good News People**)
- Seder Meal 2014; 100 people
- Prayer and knitting (prayer shawls, 200 hours each)
 - 2013... 20 participants made 43 shawls
- 6 Committee members plus 15 volunteers

Liturgical Experience

- One daily and five weekend Masses
- First-Friday Eucharistic Adoration
- Children's Liturgy of the Word Program started in 2014
- 15 Home-bound people being served
- 28 Ministers of Hospitality
- 38 Eucharistic Ministers
- 33 Lectors
- 8 Altar Servers
- 6 Cantors
- 1 Sexton
- 10 Adult Choir
- 14 Joined new Children's Choir
- 6 Contemporary Ensemble
- Expanding library / repertoire of liturgical music
- 8 Committee members plus 15 volunteers

Human Concerns

- Outreach / support to a "sister congregation" in Haiti being explored
- Destiny's Bridge film viewing / fund raising — 100 participants
- New Bereavement Program
- Once-per-quarter week long Family Promise programs
 - 25 homeless families supported
 - 300 meals provided
 - 50-60 parish volunteers per quarter
- 320 Helping Hearts casseroles provided 3200 meals during the year
- 2 blood drives providing 60 Pints — 70 volunteers and participants
- 275 gifts for Christmas "Jesse Tree"
- Care Giving Friends — Volunteers providing support for the elderly
- 4 Committee members and 10 volunteers

Social Activities

- St. Patrick's Party—300 participants
- Italian Night Party— 300 participants
- Regular "welcoming events"
- 5 Committee members and 15 volunteers



Operating Support plus Buildings & Grounds Maintenance

- 26 members and volunteers across multiple committees
- Communications
 - Major upgrades underway in the Sanctuary
 - Improvements underway on website
 - Parish Directory created for 2014
- Parish Gardening — major improvements throughout 2013-14
- Routine setup / cleanup for Parish events
- Holiday Decorating
- Cleaning / repairs / painting — Sanctuary and Parish Center
- Office management, operations and parish support





*Once One Chooses
to Become a Disciple
of Jesus Christ
Stewardship
is Not Optional*



"His master said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful servant; you have been faithful over a little, I will set you over much; enter into the joy of your master.' "

— Matthew 25:21

Who is a Christian disciple?

One who responds to Christ's call, follows Jesus, and shapes her or his life in imitation of Christ.



Who is a Christian steward?

One who receives God's gifts gratefully, cherishes and tends them in a responsible and accountable manner, shares them in justice and love with others, and returns them with increase to the Lord.

time talent treasure

...embracing God's investment strategy

*To understand what stewardship means
in a more tangible way,
it is most often expressed in resources of
“time, talent and treasure” ...
and more recently, prayer.*

The Stewardship of Time

The Stewardship of Time has also recently included being expressed as the Stewardship of Prayer.

The stewardship of time is about dedicating a portion of every day to pray—for ourselves, our families, our parish, our enemies, and our world.

Some say that time is even more precious than money. It has also been said, “Show me someone’s calendar, and I’ll show you what is really important to them.”

Prayer is the foundation of Christian life. Matthew Kelly, author of Rediscovering Catholicism, calls daily prayer one of the “four signs of a dynamic Catholic.”

His Holiness Benedict XVI, Roman pontiff emeritus says that “the prayer of each man will find its answer.” His Holiness Pope Francis says, “Our ability to seek out, discover, define and orient our mission—and be obedient to it—comes to us and grows in us only through prayer.”

Having a specific time that is scheduled and reserved throughout every week is an excellent way to develop this habit of prayer. It becomes a regular part of each day—not “when I have time.”

Prayer unites us with God. Through prayer we contemplate His infinite goodness, wisdom and power. We praise Him and thank Him for all that He is and gives to us. We acknowledge our utter dependence on Him. We ask Him to forgive our many failings. We beg Him for the grace to overcome temptation and draw closer to Him. We plead for His help on behalf of those we love.

Through prayer we acknowledge that we are nothing without God, and that all depends on His grace—in fact, even the desire to pray is itself a result of His grace. Like human relationships, our relationship with God grows stronger the more time we spend with Him.

The closer we draw to Him through prayer, the more His grace supports us as we strive to give ourselves to Him—and to others—through an active faith-driven life.

The Stewardship of Talent

God has bestowed each of us with unique talents, or “charisms,” that He gave to us to be used to benefit others. Matthew Kelly calls this our genius. He specifically asks, “What’s your genius?”

Do we know it for ourselves? Have we ever pondered the question? We all need to keep searching to find where our talent—our “genius”—best suits God’s expectation's of us.

We have also seen Stewardship as described in the Scriptures always relates to the management of something that does not belong to us, but to someone else. Even our talents and special abilities belong to God.

We own nothing that was not first given to us:

“And what do you have that you did not receive? But if you did receive it, why do you boast as if you had not received it?” (1 Corinthians 4:7).

God has entrusted us with aptitudes and abilities, and as good stewards, we must use them for His glory and not our own. This is true not only of musical, artistic, athletic, academic, business, and persuasive talents, but also of the spiritual gifts we have received:

“And since we have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let each exercise them accordingly” (Romans 12:6).

Peter specifically relates spiritual gifts to the concept of stewardship:

“As each one has received a special gift, employ it in serving one another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God” (1 Peter 4:10).

Faithful stewardship of natural talents and spiritual gifts requires that we use them to glorify God and edify others. Our purpose is not to please ourselves, but to serve others.

“Let each of us please his neighbor for his good, to his edification. For even Christ did not please Himself” (Romans 15:2-3a).

Paul adds in Philippians 2:3-4:

“Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind let each of you regard one another as more important than himself; do not merely look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others.”

Try following these steps to more fully understand your part in the Body of Christ:

- Realize that you have at least one spiritual gift, probably more.
- Pray that God will make your gifts known to you.
- Determine which of your activities the Lord seems to bless and also ask other Christians who know you well what your spiritual gifts might be.

Seek to develop your talents (gifts) through the power of the Holy Spirit. Realize that you may have gifts of which you are not aware, so try exercising various gifts. Become more mindful that we are accountable to God for stewardship of our talents and spiritual gifts.

The Stewardship of Treasure

Stewardship of Treasure is a Matter of the Heart

For many, stewardship is seen a nice way of saying, “We need more money.” But then, money, or your treasure, is indeed an excellent vehicle to deliver the Good News of the Gospel both locally and across the globe.

Pray to God asking for wisdom to understand the truth that your treasure here on earth is a gift from Him. Knowing this in your heart will change your life forever. God does not want your money, He wants your heart. For from your heart you will joyfully share His treasure.

“For where your treasure is, there also will your heart be.”

(Matthew 6:21); (Luke 12:34)

Think of God first. Give your gift to God from the first fruits, not what is left over. Give the gift of treasure to God from your heart as a sacrifice to Him with true joy, not out of obligation. Not equal giving, equal sacrifice.

“No one can serve two masters. He will either hate one and love the other, or be devoted to one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon [money].”

(Matthew 6:24)

Your giving of treasure to God—as an offering of thanks to Him—is a personal gift between you and God. This gift of treasure can be used to fulfill Christ’s request of us as Christians to feed the hungry, clothe the poor, help the needy, care for the sick and grow God’s kingdom here on earth.

The Bible gives us a reference point from which to start as good stewards of all Gods gifts: 10% of our first earnings (fruit). This may shock you, even scare you but do not let it. **TRUST IN GOD.** The remainder of your earnings are God’s gift to you to steward.

As a guideline, consider the 5-4-1 principle. 5% of your household income is returned to your local parish (weekly offertory), 4% to other charities of choice (e.g. American Cancer Society), and 1% to your local Diocese

“All tithes [10%] of the land, whether in grain from the fields or in fruit from the trees, belong to the LORD, as sacred to him.” (Leviticus 27:30)

As you review your faith journey in the Stewardship of Treasure, look at the treasure God has entrusted to you and decide what personal sacrifice you and your family will make to maximize your gift back to God. Pray for the wisdom to understand the difference between your wants and your true needs. Then with joy, give back to Him.

“It is more blessed to give than to receive.” (Acts 20:35)

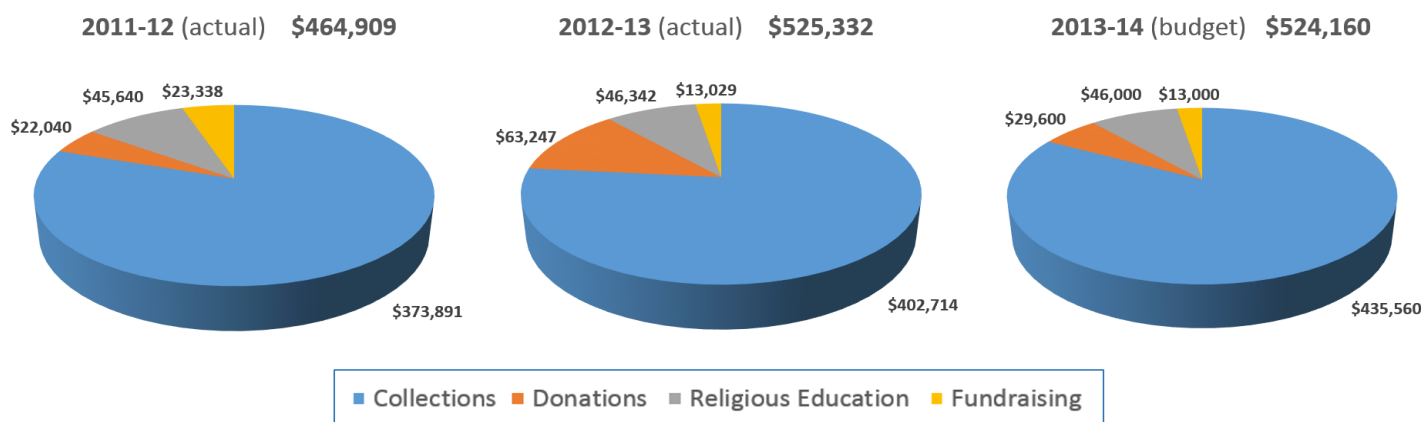
Start today. Give to God first out of your earnings—His gift. When you give from your heart, and from your sacrifice, this personal gift of your treasure will be pleasing to God. Consider on-line giving as a means for sustaining your intentional gift of treasure.

Stewardship of treasure can also be passed on after your death through a will and estate planning. Using your treasure to carry on God’s work here on earth, after your passing, is another way of expressing your true Christian calling as a follower of Christ.

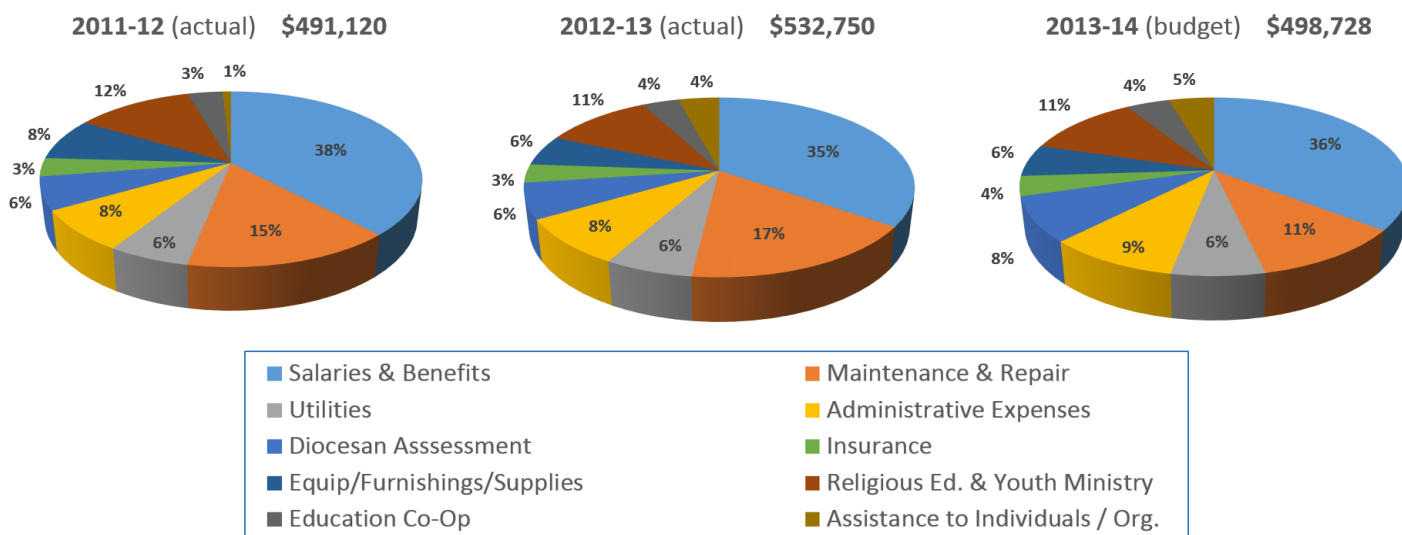
Our vision for the Church of the Precious Blood is to be a place where God will be fully experienced and also where all will live as a Community of Disciples of Jesus Christ.

Parish Households	1,434	Adult Baptisms & Confirmations (RCIA) —	9 in 2012... 3 in 2013
Parishioners	2,904	Young Adult Confirmations —	48 in 2012... 48 in 2013
New Households in 2013	131	Infant Baptisms—	28 in 2012... 51 in 2013
New Parishioners in 2013	326	First Reconciliations & Communion—	54 in 2012... 54 in 2013
		Marriages—	18 in 2012... 30 in 2013
Average Mass attendance in 2013	655	Deaths / Funerals—	21 in 2012... 20 in 2013

Parish Income



Parish Expense



Our Mission at the Church of The Precious Blood is to spread our faith by becoming the people God calls us to be, by proclaiming God's living word through our actions, celebrating the sacraments, ministering to one another and living the Gospel in our hearts, homes, community and world.

Our Ministry in Action

I AM THE VINE; YOU ARE THE BRANCHES.
 IF YOU ABIDE IN ME, AND I IN YOU,
you will bear much fruit,
 FOR APART FROM ME YOU CAN DO NOTHING.
John 15:5



**First Communion workshop...
 children learning about the bread
 used at their Communion.**



Our Sunday Confirmation class supported Second graders learning the Prayer-of-Sorrow for their Sacrament of Penance. They helped younger children make flash cards so it was easier to memorize the prayer.



Christmas Pageant



RCIA



Adult Choir

Parish Pastoral Council —2014
Madeline Badalaty — Chairperson
Steve Bulvanoski — Spiritual Life
Jim Cantelmo — Human Concerns
Joe Clancy — Finance
Tom Cooney — Communications
John Hammitt — Stewardship

Kathleen Kelly-Bellusci — Social
Leonard Kiczek — Member-at-Large
Donna Kohl — Member-at-Large
Sarah Lang — Youth Representative
Andrea Luker — Education
Maura McCann — Building and Grounds
Joan Walsh — Liturgy



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