

## Scott's Corner

Greetings from Chicago! While writing my column, I am sitting in O'Hare airport reflecting and trying to digest all of the information I was exposed to in the past three days at the International Catholic Stewardship Conference.

One exciting development from the conference which we plan to implement as soon as possible is a new online giving module. As you are aware, parishioners may currently login to our website and make a contribution via credit card. Unfortunately, the process is arduous and requires the parishioner to enter their personal information every time a transaction takes place. What we are going to implement is very thrilling. Here are the details. The parish database which we use to monitor contributions, attendance and sacraments is operated through a software program called LOGOS. LOGOS now offers an integrated online giving module. It will work in the following way. Every parishioner will be able to login to our website where they will see a link to the LOGOS database. Upon clicking the link, they will be prompted for a username and password. After this information is entered, they will be directed to the LOGOS database. You will then have the option of performing a plethora of different functions. Most importantly, we would like every parishioner to create an account as you will be able to do much more than contribute. You will be able to edit data such as personal information, provide your email address, view upcoming events and of course make a contribution. The contribution option allows you to setup recurring credit card transactions or automated drafts from your bank account. In addition, you will be able to view your giving for any date range you choose. No longer will you be surprised when you receive your year end statement. Now you will be able to verify every contribution that has been entered in our database. You may also register for religious education and pay the fee directly from our database. The most exciting function of this module is the addition of a field for your email address. By providing us with your email address, we will be able to send out important information by group notifying our parishioners of upcoming pertinent events. Ultimately, this can develop into an outstanding communications tool as our parishioners will never be "out of the loop." I will continually update you on the progress of the implementation of this new module.

Thank you so much to all of our parishioners that have increased their giving in response to the presentation given by Bill Wright and myself on September 27 & 28 detailing the "State of St. John the Evangelist." Again this week, we had an increase compared to the prior year of over 6.5%. Although we are still struggling to get by, with your continued support and increased giving, we will surely dig our way out of this hole.

Please visit our new website! Deb Vale has completely redesigned our site into a much more functional and attractive format. There are now drop down screens, interactive options and much more. Please check it out at [www.saintjohntheevangelist.com](http://www.saintjohntheevangelist.com). Deb spent a lot of time on the website and we would like to thank her for her efforts. There are not many parishes that are blessed with an in-house IT (Information Technology) staff member. Deb not only serves as the webmaster and system administrator but she also focuses the majority of her time as music coordinator. Thanks again Deb for all of the diverse job functions you perform.

In addition, Deb has also redesigned our parish bulletin. It is absolutely beautiful and will be much more readable than the older format. We are hoping to have the new bulletin ready for print in the next few weeks. One funny note from the stewardship conference involved a session regarding parish bulletins and the fact that the format of many never changes. The presenter commented that someone from his parish called and asked about a ministry that they were interested in. The parishioner claimed that it was not in the bulletin. The Secretary commented that the information was indeed in the bulletin and was in the same place that it had been for the past 10 years. Because of the stagnant nature of the bulletin, the parishioner simply read over the information time and again. This led the presenter to remind us of the following bit of information. If you want someone to see something in your bulletin, you must follow the following order. Repetition, repetition, repetition, variation and repetition. By changing the bulletin format, we are doing our part in creating some variation.

They were many very informative sessions at the International Catholic Stewardship Conference. One which I found particularly interesting was entitled “communications, beyond the parish bulletin.” The purpose of including Scott’s Corner in the bulletin is strictly to enhance communication. Some of the statistics from this presentation were startling at best. Here at St. John the Evangelist, our only legitimate communications tool is the parish bulletin. Of course we have a website, however it is not an “in your face” tangible vehicle for communication. The presenter indicated that if we would like for our parishioners to read a particular piece of information in our parish bulletin, we would have to run the advertisement for four consecutive weeks in order for everyone to see it, and even then, it would have to “stand out” from the rest of the body of the bulletin. The statistics show that on average, only 25% of the registered Catholic parishioners nationwide will attend Mass on any given Sunday. I truly believe that the percentages here at St. John the Evangelist are somewhat higher; however I was aghast at the dismal stats included in his power point presentation. This takes me back to the comments from my previous paragraph regarding repetition. This could possibly also explain why the CFA has been increasingly successful over the past several years. As you know, nearly every week, I dedicate a paragraph to the CFA and its importance. If his statistics are truly accurate, I am eventually reaching all of the families attending Mass at one time or another with my plea to help us reach our goal.

My hope is that as we integrate the new LOGOS module spoken of previously, we can make great strides in creating better communication. Let’s face it; barring an announcement by the pastor, our communication conduits are extremely limited. As we better communicate we may better evangelize and welcome those that are not currently involved in ministry into the fold. There were several parishes participating in the stewardship conference that had upwards of 85% Mass participation and ministry participation. Think about that! 85% of the registered families participate in a parish ministry. And when I refer to participating, I am not referring to a monetary contribution. They are actively involved in a parish ministry giving of their time and talent. Another common theme floating around the conference was related to the lack of invitation to participate. Many of our parishioners do not participate in a ministry simply because they have never been asked to do so. We have a very strong core group here at St. John the Evangelist that I would refer to as the “Doers.” These are the ones that seem to do everything from hospitality to bereavement to liturgy. Our goal is to expand this group to include everyone. I understand that this will take time and from what I was taught in Chicago, many years of time until it is truly effective. Since we have now developed a stewardship committee, the real job of recruiting begins. With that being said, if you have never been asked before to participate in a ministry, get ready because you will be in the near future. There was representation from many parishes that have created stewardship as a way of life and I am of the belief that this can be done here as well. We already have a great core group in place. All that remains to do is make our parish all inclusive.

The Glackin Classic has been canceled for only the 2<sup>nd</sup> time in twenty years due to a poor turnout (the 1<sup>st</sup> cancellation was in 2005 due to Hurricane Wilma.) We only filled 44 of the 88 spots available and are unable to host the tournament. I understand that there are many competing events in the end of this month and Fr. Glackin will be much better served by the two dinners held this past week in addition to the Mass and celebration on the 24<sup>th</sup>. Hopefully we will be able to start again next fall with a new golf tournament format. I plan to host the Spring Tournament this coming April assuming we can recruit the appropriate number of players.

Thank you so much for supporting St. John the Evangelist.

In His work together,

Scott Schlossberg, MBA  
General Manager