



St. Benedict Catholic Church

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My Brothers and Sisters in Christ:

The call to Stewardship of God's gifts to us as individuals is also a call to St. Benedict Parish to be a good steward of the time, talent and treasure given by the members of our faith community. Over the past three years, the management of St. Benedict has been in the caring hands of the Parish Pastoral Council. With my assignment, by Bishop Sheridan as Parish Director, the responsibility for administration of St. Benedict Parish rests with me. In this capacity, I would like to report to you on our stewardship.

The existence of St. Benedict Quasi Parish is a testimony to the giving heart, commitment and dedication of those who first promoted the need for a new parish in the Falcon area. From the founding families came the members of the Parish Pastoral Council and chairpersons for the various ministries. Two of the things you will see in the attached Stewardship Report to the Parish is how well this group was able to project a future budget for all our ministries, and how they set aside surplus offertory moneys for the future development of the parish. Their success in managing the parish is an example of outstanding stewardship. We are indebted to them and all who worked with them.

It is difficult to accurately report on the actual number of volunteers who stepped up and gave of their time and talents these past years. Even more difficult would be to calculate all of the hours they freely gave in service to the parish. A partial list of what can be reported includes the Religious Education programs for children (18 receiving First Communion and 20 receiving the Sacrament of Confirmation) and adults, inspiring liturgies each Sunday in a rented gymnasium transformed weekly into worship space, the setting up and maintenance of the Parish House, a youth program based on the Catholic Faith, an Outreach Ministry, a Vacation Bible School, and an informative weekly bulletin. All of which could not take place without parishioners giving service to their faith community.

Not only does a church parish need workers to be successful in its mission, it needs financial support. The attached Stewardship Report, prepared by the Parish Finance Council, will provide you with a breakdown of the level of time, talent and treasure provided to St. Benedict Parish over the past years. It reports on all of the financial support received and the budgeted expenditures made during last fiscal year, as well as the financial obligations facing the parish. You will also find a breakdown of the 2007-2008 budget indicating the types of expenditures necessary for our various programs and ministries. I hope it gives you a full picture of the health and vitality of St. Benedict Parish.

What this report does not include is an analysis of the giving patterns of individual households, nor should it. Personal stewardship of God's gifts, something between the individual and Our Lord, is not just about money. Not everyone has been given the same gifts, or opportunities to use their gifts to achieve the economic resources they need, or believe they need so they can give to the Church. Some may find it necessary to give of their time and talents to build up the Kingdom of God, because they are not able, at this time, to give financially. And, such stewardship decisions are best made in prayers of thanksgiving and praise to God.

Looking forward, we now must plan for our future. We must decide what we want to do and what is required to make these plans a reality. This will take a level of sacrificial giving of time, talent and treasure that will be the identifier and legacy of St. Benedict Catholic Church. But that can only become a reality if we build on the foundation of a parish with a tradition of active individual participation in, and funding of, our current ministries and programs.

In closing, I would invite you to bring me your suggestions and questions about the stewardship being exercised by St. Benedict Parish. We not only want to keep everyone fully aware of inner workings of the parish, we also want to continue to learn how we can better serve the entire parish and the general community around us. St. Benedict Catholic Church needs the input, suggestions, concerns and questions of every member of the parish. It is only through this confident kind of open dialogue that we can grow and mature as a faith family, each playing a valued part in its future.

With the recent good news about the donation of land for the parish, I can only guess at what will be in next year's Stewardship Report to the Parish. If your responses to the needs of St. Benedict Parish this year are any indication, it will be a preview of what generations to come will look back on with admiration and appreciation. Together we will *Build on Faith*.

Yours in Christ,

Deacon Lynn Sherman
Parish Director