

March 19, 2003

Greetings as we focus on the new life and energy of spring.

As part of the annual Diocesan Stewardship Thrust, we are now into the Season of Lent with its emphasis on Prayer. We hope and pray that you have been able to utilize this time to help parishioners to grow in their prayer life. While we realize you are still developing the prayer aspect of Stewardship, it is not too early to begin planning for the next phase of Stewardship which is Service. This next phase is scheduled for the period after Easter through to June with a special week May 18-24, 2003.

Service is an opportunity for us to express our faith. It is our hope that parishioners can find that serving others is an important means of serving God. We can achieve a collective mission and make the world a more compassionate place to live by giving our time and talents to those around us. The Stewardship of Service successfully bridges the material world around us and the world of the Spirit within us.

During Lent, the centerpiece of the Diocesan Stewardship Thrust was the distribution and promotion of the "Little Black Book". For the Stewardship of Service, the centerpiece is to encourage parishes to promote every parish, household, and individual to do at least one "*Random Act of Kindness*" during the week of May 18-24, 2003. Look inside this packet for ideas of *Random Acts of Kindness* that your whole parish can participate in. Let us know what your Parish chose as their *Random Act of Kindness*. It will be inspiring and fun to share your Act of Kindness with other parishes. Please remember that we give the week of May 18-24 as an ideal for *Random Acts of Kindness* but it will depend on each parish's schedule.

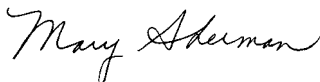
The manner in which your parish addresses the Stewardship of Service will vary by the pastoral and practical circumstances of your parish. Although all the information may seem overwhelming, please don't panic. We know many of you already have service ideas in the works and have been doing good things. We also know each parish already has wonderful people giving of their time. If your parish is already in the process of doing the Stewardship of Service, it might be a good time to look at new things for next year. Please continue to celebrate and affirm volunteerism in your parish with special emphasis on the Stewardship of Service dimension.

We hope the materials in this packet will be of assistance in renewing the service dimension of your parish or challenge you to plan something new. Many of you have a variety of service opportunities already available within your parish. We encourage you to broaden the scope of the Stewardship of Service beyond parish to include how we serve one another within individual households and extend service to the greater community as we embark on a journey that puts our faith into action.

In Christ's Peace,



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