

Dear Fellow Parishioner:

Hi, my name is Patty Jarzembowski and I am an Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion. I would like to tell you a little bit about myself and this ministry and ask you to consider becoming part of this ministry.

I do believe I have a vocation to be a Steward of Christ as an Extraordinary Minister of Communion. I have been an Extraordinary Minister of Communion for the past 9 years. Why do I continue? Every time I distribute the Body or Blood of Christ, I see our Lord in your eyes. I am so blessed to have this opportunity to experience this phenomenon.

Being an Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion allows me to be a Steward of Christ. Being a Steward is my response to love God and all of you, my neighbors. This ministry brings me joy and fills me with the real presence of Christ.

Did you ever experience seeing a new born baby, the sparkle in a child's eye when they just learned how to walk or ride a bike. Did you ever feel the warmth of when your spouse or child said "I love you". This is how it feels to be an Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion. When I offer Jesus to you, I see Him in your eyes. I feel uplifted and full of joy. This feeling is magical. I feel you are my family.

I am also blessed to have my husband, Paul, be an Extraordinary Minister at the same mass we attend. It is great to have the continuance of teamwork as we worship together. Sharing this bond with my spouse makes me feel closer to him. We both share this same feeling.

I invite you to be a Steward of Christ as an Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion. If you have any questions, I will be in the main vestibule after Mass. Thank you for listening to me and I pray that you will discern on one of the most beautiful ministries we have at St. Joseph Parish.

Sincerely,

Patty Jarzembowski

Sunday, July 15 8:00 A.M. Mass
Noel Cusick – Nursing Home Steward

Good Morning, parishioners and friends of St. Joseph Parish. My name is Noel. My family and I have been parishioners of St. Joseph's parish since May 11th 1974, our daughter's 5th birthday. I am pursuing the journey of stewardship because I, at an advanced age, have received the gift of good health. In a small way I would like to give back to others who are dealing with serious health issues. The ministry that I find most rewarding is that of Nursing Home steward. On Thursdays, at approximately 9:30 A.M., I join a few other parishioners and friends and meet at Kindred, also known as, Regency Nursing Home, which is located here in Dyer, east of the church near the post office. We assemble the ambulatory residents in the dining room at the facility for a Mass offered by Father Terry. Most of us have a specific function. I act as the lector and do the reading during the mass and help to gather the residents who attend. Other stewards lead the residents in the rosary or act as extraordinary ministers, taking the Eucharist to those who are unable to attend the Mass. I have been doing this for 9 or 10 years. I am one of the rookies. Most of the others have been doing this longer than me. There are times when nursing home stewards have other personal obligations, and have to miss a week, but we attend as regularly as we can. Even though some residents appear to not know what is going on during the Mass, on occasion they will surprise us by whispering the Our Father. Our visit to Kindred lasts approximately an hour and a half.

The thought of stewardship to me is logical and acceptable. It seems to make sense that if you want to be a disciple of Christ, you should be willing to share your time and talent to benefit others. The time I spend with the residents is as much a blessing to me as it is to them.

I've really only had 2 goals in my life. One was to be a mother and other was to be a lawyer. All my life I knew I wanted to be a mom, but it wasn't until I was about 24 years old that I started thinking that I could be an attorney.

I came from a very blue collar family. My father worked in the mills his whole life. Though he was one of the lucky ones who didn't get laid off when the steel industry hit hard times, we always lived in constant fear that he could lose his job any day. My mom, who was my first role model in spirituality, was a stay at home mom raising us 4 kids. She always turned to prayer to help see our family through hard times and thanked God for all His blessings in the good times.

In my extended family, not only was I the first person to go to college, I was the first woman to earn a high school diploma. My undergraduate career lasted 6 years because I could only afford to go to college part time at first while I worked 2 jobs to help with the cost. During my senior year when the idea of earning a degree became a real possibility, I remember feeling absolutely invincible. Something that I had worked so hard for, for so long was going to happen and I felt like I was on top of the world. This feeling that I could accomplish anything is what started me thinking of law school. If I could earn a bachelors degree, I could earn a law degree and thankfully my grades had always been good, so I took the acceptance test, applied and got in.

That was about the end of my euphoric feelings though. Financial aid wasn't what I had hoped for, my trip out to law school was plagued with car troubles, and the room I was staying in through orientation was infested with roaches. I felt like maybe it just wasn't meant to be, like perhaps I had set my sights too high. And being the tough, strong woman that I am, I dealt with it by having an emotional breakdown. My mom, who was with me through the whole ordeal, did her best to comfort me and I remember she told me to pray to St. Jude. Dumbfounded and angry, I asked her how the Beatles were supposed to help. And so began my first lesson in the saving help of saints.

All through law school, whenever I felt overwhelmed or that the journey just seemed too much to bear, I would pray to St. Jude for help. To this day, I still call on him quite often to get me through the difficulty or hopeless times.

Accomplishing my second goal of becoming a mother, likewise had its ups and downs. When I met my husband he had been married once before, so instantly I was a step-mom with 3 wonderful stepchildren. And I had wanted my stepchildren to also have a strong faith that they could turn to in their times of need, so we enrolled them in religious classes, but the best way to teach our children is through example, so I started teaching religious education. The 2011-2012 school year was my 7th year as a catechist here at St. Joes.

But I didn't just want to be a step-mom, I wanted to give birth, to know how it felt to have a baby growing inside of me, to understand a mother's unconditional love.

After my husband and I were married we started working on having a baby and getting pregnant happened rather quickly. However, keeping a baby inside my womb proved to be much more difficult and I miscarried. The pain of losing a baby and the thought of not ever becoming a mother was the

most terrible experience that I have ever endured. And once again I turned to my faith to help me through this loss. I found a special prayer to St. Theresa of the child Jesus and a novena to the Virgin Mary which gave me strength and hope, and I constantly promised heaven that if I were blessed with a baby, I would raise him or her to be a child of God. In all I would lose 4 babies before God gave me my daughter.

Through the loving grace of Jesus, I am an attorney and a mother. But I also have an obligation; an obligation to our Lord. I had made a promise to raise Reyah as a true child of God.

About two and a half years ago, I had read in our church bulletin that volunteers were needed at a local nursing home to help push the residents confined to a wheelchair down for mass. I called the number and informed the woman that my 10 month old baby and I would like to help. A little confused, she said we could give it a try and see how it goes. The next Thursday, I showed up with my infant daughter tucked inside a baby knap-sack on my back. We continued to go every week and through the years she has made many friends and to some she has truly become a bright little ray of light, whose faces light up when she walks in. She brings them such a joy, while **my** heart smiles because I know that I have begun teaching my daughter in the stewardship of Christ.

Today, my journey with God has also lead me to become a participant in the American Cancer Society's Relay for Life. I have recently celebrated my 5th year with team Destination Cure, which was founded in 2007. Since it began, this team of 38 moms has helped raise over \$125,000 towards finding a cure for cancer.

Likewise, my faith in God has helped me to find employment as an adjunct professor at the Calumet College of St. Joseph and as an attorney with the Evans Williams Law Group, which is a spiritual based law firm, whose philosophy is that God has given all of us unique skills, talents, and abilities. We must use them to do our part.

I am also a proud member of our St. Joseph Pastoral Council. And as such, I have been asked to write this letter detailing my voyage in Christ's stewardship, in an attempt to inspire more of our congregation to step up and walk with Jesus. I surely don't think of myself as an inspiration. I'm just a working mom trying to find enough time to devote towards my marriage, my family, my career, my charities and my passions. I'm just like most of you, trying to find enough time...which, after all, is one of our most precious gifts from God. I'm definitely not an inspiration, but I would like to be an example of what a little of your time and sharing of your faith could become. Thank you.

Tamara Fredrickson

Stewardship Letter/Minister of Care

Hi, I'm Yvonne Weaver and a member of St. Joseph Parish. I'm involved in stewardship here at St. Joseph as a Minister of Care. A Minister of Care is a person who carries the Body of Christ- Holy Communion to the homebound. I became interested in the ministry because of the faith- witness of others who came forward to share the Body of Christ with husband during his illness. I experienced the marked conversion periods this made in his spiritual journey as well as mine, made possible through others recognizing God's gift within them to minister in this way – I felt a tug to someday do the same for others. I came to discover that "tug" was God's gift of a caregiver and I was being asked to share that gift.

I am pursuing this way of stewardship because, as a disciple of Christ I am called to continue the mission of the Lord to care for my brothers and sisters in whatever their need might be and here particularly to look to the sick and infirm. In the Gospel of Matthew 25: 36 the Lord invites me saying, "I was ill and you comforted me". As I travel to each person's home, I am reminded of my own journey of faith and how I am comforted through an ever mindful truth of the mystical body of Christ –many parts but one body. That we are one in the real presence of Christ –Holy Communion – a community of believers not held together by a church building, but God 's loving gift of salvation -forgiveness and eternal life -celebrated in the Eucharist.

I have come to realize that there is a cost involved in embracing the stewardship way of life namely being able to balance my schedule to the needs of others, becoming present to the homebound, looking beyond my own comfortable realm of private prayer toward a shared prayer together. I am challenged to move into and join into the relationship between the sick person and the Lord. I cherish how the Holy Spirit has empowered me to help others within the close proximity of the sometimes stark reality scene of a sick bed. The joy I sense through body gestures, eye contact and words sum up Christ's presence here and now.

I do believe I have a vocation to be this steward of Christ because God has helped develop a deeper attitude of thankfulness in my heart. This gratefulness leads me to be his disciple and "Give thanks to God the Father always in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ." Ep 5:20

I invite and welcome you to prayerfully look into your heart and ask the Lord to help you discern the call of becoming a Minister of Care. This ministry is carried out on a weekly basis that involves carrying the Body of Christ to our homebound according to those who have called the parish requesting this service. I call the home the day before to schedule a time after one of the Masses. I would be glad to answer any questions you might have concerning this response to God's gift of a "Caregiver."

Thank you