

Everything we have and everything we are is a gift from God

New stewardship efforts helping parishioners respond to call to discipleship

CARBONDALE – For the last several months, Father Seth Wasnock has used one phase more than most others when talking about the two parishes he leads.

The saying, ‘Building Disciples, Sharing Love,’ has been gaining traction amongst his parishioners in Lackawanna County’s Up Valley.

During Lent, the pastor of Saint Rose of Lima Parish and Our Lady of Mount Carmel Parish launched a new stewardship program focused on that theme. In just a short amount of time, the success has been noticeable!

“We would like to change the mentality that you just have to come to Mass on Sunday,” Father Seth said. “It is about having a relationship and encounter with Jesus Christ every day and how we go out and share that love and be the disciples that we are called to be through the gift of our Baptism.”

With the help of Our Sunday Visitor, a resource company that partners with parishes and dioceses, Father Seth spoke at Masses of the many ways people can use their time, talent and treasure to better both parishes. He also sent mailings to parishioners and posted videos on his parish website.

“We always have to look at the traditional three ‘t’s’ – time, talent and treasure – but also move into prayer, service and giving. How do we pray? How do we serve and how do we give?” he explained.

Parishioners have responded in all three ways!

“We had several new parishioners come forward to embark on new initiatives,” Father Seth said. “One was to reinvigorate our weekly Holy Hours. About 30 people have signed up to devote an hour of their time in front of the Blessed Sacrament. It is something that we

had at Saint Rose and Our Lady of Mount Carmel in years past but COVID changed some of that.”

The stewardship program also led to the creation of a new Marian Society for the two parishes.

“The Marian Society is focusing on social, spiritual and service efforts. Members have come together from both parishes to host events,” he added. “We’re looking forward to the fall and maybe hosting a baby pantry, back to school Mass and grandparents day.”

More than 40 percent of parishioners (440 households total) also pledged to increase their charitable giving to their parish, pledging an additional \$89,105 to Saint Rose of Lima and Our Lady of Mount Carmel Parishes combined over the next calendar year. Parishioners of the two parishes donated \$13,105 in one-time financial gifts as well.

“The stewardship effort is



Father Seth Wasnock, V.F., celebrates the Our Lady of Mount Carmel Feast Mass on July 18, 2023, at Our Lady of Mount Carmel Parish in Carbondale.

really just a way of re-engaging people,” Father Seth added.

In the months ahead, the Carbondale pastor plans to highlight different parish ministries in the joint bulletin, put together a ‘State of the Parish’ report and help his pastoral

council become more of a “mission advancement team.”

“It is so important that we look at how we interact with one another and how we go out, as we are commissioned, to be a disciple of Jesus Christ,” Father Seth ended by saying.

MOUNTAIN TOP – After publishing the financial report and parish life statistics for Saint Jude Parish in January and February respectively, Father Joseph Evanko, V.E., made a conscious effort to focus on stewardship efforts this past spring.

“It really allows us to continue to build upon the mission of what a

parish is,” Father Evanko said. “It allows us to continue to create new ministries with how our pastoral plan guides us.”

Using the theme, “United by the Eucharist,” Father Evanko invited his parishioners to recommit themselves to financially supporting his Mountain Top parish as well as dedicating their

time and talents to the church by hosting a ministry fair.

“It was an awareness, first and foremost, as well as educational and formational in the sense of stewardship,” he explained. “We’re not just asking for money. We’re putting it in the context of what it means to be a disciple and a good steward of the gifts and resources God has given to us as a parish and as individuals.”

The ministry fair featured information and an invitation for parishioners to join Saint Jude’s more than 30 ministry programs, which include hospitality ministers, peer grief support group, rosary makers and children’s choir.

Nearly 40 percent of parishioners at Saint Jude Parish pledged to increase their weekly commitment to the church, which will allow Father Evanko

and parish staff to be creative in developing new programs.

“Some of the money will be used to have our second ECHO apprentice from Notre Dame. We had such a great success with that program last year, so that helped us commit to a second ECHO apprentice and that whole program which has provided a lot of different ministries for us that we wouldn’t have otherwise,” Father Evanko explained.

Last year, the parish’s ECHO apprentice helped to create many young adult and young adult family programs.

“We will use some of this money to make sure that young adult/young adult family ministry continues to be developed and have further outreach,” Father Evanko added. “It gives us that ability to be creative with outreach of all different types.”

Saint Jude Parish also stresses inter-generational faith formation. The parish invested in ‘FORMED’ that brings Catholic video content to families and individuals.

“The increase in offertory is going to help us continue to pay for FORMED and then do spin-off faith formation. We’re trying to do that on an adult level, obviously at a religious education level, as well as men’s and women’s groups with more formation and offering spiritual retreats,” Father Evanko added.

As more people return to church after the COVID-19 pandemic, evangelization efforts are also top of mind.

“We’re talking about how to reach out to those people on the margins that have not come back from COVID, or are no coming to church, and how to evangelize them,” Father ended by saying.



Father Joseph Evanko, V.E., confirms a RCIA candidate during the Easter Vigil Mass in April at Saint Jude Parish in Mountain Top.