

Stewardship

- a journey in intentional discipleship



Welcome to the first edition of our Archdiocesan Stewardship Newsletter! With this biannual publication we hope to share resources and inspiration to help parishes promote intentional discipleship. In this edition we look back on 2020 - a year full of challenges and opportunities!

Issue 1 - February 2021

Suzanne Aubert the “Intentional Disciple” Stewardship Reflection Day

February 2020, Home of Compassion

The basis for our combined Reflection Day was Suzanne Aubert's response to “Go to my people” (in NZ) and the quote “Give me a drink” from the scripture reading of the Woman at the Well. We were challenged to think about ‘What is God asking of me?’ With the help of scripture readings, video clips about pivotal moments in Suzanne Aubert's life, personal reflection and sharing times, we pondered this question. A picnic lunch was enjoyed on the lawn before a stroll up to the reservoir Suzanne Aubert had built with the assistance of volunteers, to supply water to the convent and orphanage, onsite.

Mission Expo

March 2020

The Stewardship Committee was involved in the Mission Expo Day held at Bishop Viard College in Porirua. The purpose of the Mission Expo Day was to introduce and showcase the many Catholic organisations that are involved in Mission in New Zealand and overseas. It was a very positive experience: the organisations were enthusiastic, welcoming and informative. The student welcome and final Liturgy, and the performances from different colleges were spiritual and meaningful.

The Stewardship Committee members conducted a survey amongst attendees to determine how welcoming our Parishes are and whether they feel connected to their Parish. We found that consistently, those who were involved in parish life and various ministries felt connected.

Those not connected weren't in a parish group/ ministry and felt there was a lack of communication from the parish council, parish leadership team and people in charge of ministries. No one had personally invited them to join a group/ ministry. People and activities were “too set in their ways.”

Suggestions for making parishes more welcoming:

- Enabling the youth to be more involved in parish life e.g. have roles in ministries, youth led liturgies, more youth activities in the parish.
- More social events so parishioners have the opportunity to get to know each other.
- Actively welcome new parishioners and personally invite them to join groups/ministries.



Stewardship is...

A way of life...
not a programme

An attitude of gratitude...
not an activity

Rooted in Scripture...
not the latest fad

A practical way to holiness...
not a way to raise money

Planned, intentional, sacrificial – gratefully giving back to God our ‘first fruits’...
not about left-overs

It requires a continual conversion of the heart...
not a decision of the head

Integral to our Catholic faith, to who we are and whose we are...
not an option

It is why and how we do what we do – not another task but an act of worship...
not another thing to do

It is about our response to God's generosity – a need to give rather than giving to a need...
not about our generosity

It is **what we do** after we say
“I believe”



Lectio Divina Workshops

The Stewardship Committee looked at what parishes had done to keep people connected and nurtured during lockdown, and how we could encourage groups within parishes to pray together - whether in person or online. In August and November we offered workshops on how to lead Lectio Divina in groups. Workshop attendees were led through a session of Lectio Divina praying with the upcoming Sunday's Gospel. They were then encouraged to take it back to their parishes as a way of bringing people together to pray.

What is Lectio Divina? A very simple way of praying with the Scriptures which can be used individually but is also an ideal way to bring people to pray and journey together. Using Lectio to pray with the Sunday's Gospel reading is a great way to prepare for the Sunday Eucharist, as it helps us to open our hearts to God's Word. People are invited to share whatever strikes them from the Scripture reading and how it relates to their lives. Lectio is not a time of discussion but simply a time of sharing and listening with the heart.

Advent Lectio Divina at Te Awakairangi

Helen and Kevin Plant from Te Awakairangi parish ran a series of Lectio Divina evenings in the weeks of Advent as a preparation for the Christmas season. These were well attended by parishioners who felt the experience of Lectio gave them a greater appreciation and understanding of the Gospels in the lead up to Christmas - an opportunity to spend quiet time reflecting on the Word in a very busy time of year.

The parish will be running a similar series during Lent and would encourage all parishes to provide a similar experience for their parishioners. If you require assistance please contact Chris Walkerdine on c.walkerdine@wn.catholic.org.nz or 027 628 2030.

Alpha Courses

Equipping your parish in its mission to help people encounter Jesus.

A great way to reach out, bring new people in and build community. Alpha can help the parish build:

A culture of Invitation and Hospitality

Alpha helps the parish to become an evangelising community.

A culture of Encounter

Alpha helps the parish foster relationships with Jesus and grow disciples.

Culture of Missionary Discipleship

Alpha engages lay people in the life and mission of the church.

For more information on how to run this exciting programme in your parish, please contact Chris Walkerdine on c.walkerdine@wn.catholic.org.nz or 027 628 2030.

Intentional Discipleship in our Parishes

Despite the challenges of 2020, Parishes around our Archdiocese showed Intentional Discipleship in creative and fruitful ways. Here are some examples.

Sharing Faith:

Lists of online Masses and other online faith resources were shared on parish newsletters across the Archdiocese. There were many creative ways of journeying through Holy Week, including putting a green branch on the doors of houses on Palm Sunday and praying the Stations of the Cross on Zoom. Others had weekly Lectio Divina online, and one parish even had a children's liturgy on Zoom!

Sharing prayers and reflections:

Parishes used the parish newsletter to electronically send Prayers of the Faithful for Sunday, reflections on the Gospel, links to relevant YouTube clips or other prayer websites.

Reaching out to ethnic communities:

Parishes shared links to weekly Covid 19 updates in a number of Pacifica languages, as well as the Miha Maori on Sundays.

Sessions for Youth:

Some youth groups in parishes hosted online weekly evenings for the youth, to enable them to connect, find support and grow in their faith while they couldn't meet physically.

Collaborating with other churches:

Ministers from various churches had combined Zoom meetings to share ways of reaching out to their respective communities.

Alpha Online

For many years the Tawa combined churches have been running Alpha programmes. In 2020 they offered Alpha online for the first time.

Missionary Outreach - essential service!

Some parishes offered their parish centres as hubs for networking and the collection and distribution of food parcels for needy families.

Strengthening Faith Communities

Parishes found creative ways to connect and build community. Telephone trees, emails, dropping off newsletters, food parcels, significant birthdays acknowledged, morning teas on Zoom, driveway / over the fence get-togethers...

A thought to ponder...
**How can we make the most of
the learning of 2020 to continue to
build intentional discipleship in our
parishes this year?**

