

ST. VINCENT DE PAUL CATHOLIC PARISH



PARISHIONER PROFILE:

BERNICE CROCKER

*Embracing Stewardship and
Active Discipleship Through Service*

When Bernice Crocker retired from teaching 13 years ago, she was looking for a part-time job. She says finding a position at St. Vincent de Paul was one of those “‘God is laughing’ moments.” Bernice never thought she’d be working for the parish, wearing her current hats of Tribunal Advocate and also teaching for St. Vincent de Paul Academy.



Bernice Crocker with her husband of 44 years, Mark

The Tribunal Advocate position — which Bernice took over from Mary Kay Manning — helps parishioners and Catholics from throughout the Diocese of Fort Worth who are seeking a declaration of invalidity, also called an annulment. These are determined through a Catholic tribunal. The tribunal members determine whether a marriage is invalid, meaning it fell short of one of the essential elements of a marriage. Because the process can be confusing, a Tribunal Advocate is available to help walk a person through the process. The advocate also serves as a liaison with the tribunal. Often, people are seeking an annulment to come into full communion with the Catholic Church or because they want to remarry in the Catholic Church.

“I am here to walk through the process with people and break it down for them,” Bernice says.

Bernice also helps review documents and paperwork before these materials are submitted to the tribunal. This results in saved time for everyone involved.

“The most important thing that I want people to know is, I am there for them through the entire process, no matter how long it takes,” Bernice says.

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Parishioner Profile: Bernice Crocker continued from front cover

Bernice learned the job through a series of training sessions, and in networking with advocates for other parishes and dioceses. She has attended several training sessions in the San Antonio area. Bernice urges those who are considering beginning this process to be both prepared and patient.

“Some people really find healing through this,” Bernice says. “I am thankful to be with people to empathize, guide them and be there for them. Everything that people tell me is kept confidential.”

At times, Bernice has been called on to serve as an advocate for the respondent, which is the term for the person in the marriage who did not file the case.

Having been a teacher for more than 30 years, Bernice also serves the parish by teaching Bible stories to students ages 2-4 at the Academy. She also covers the front desk as needed.

“I love working with people who are practicing the same faith as me,” Bernice says. “I have just enjoyed getting to know others and the camaraderie.”

Bernice has been married to her husband, Mark, for 44 years. The couple has three sons and seven grandchildren. In her free time, she enjoys practicing yoga, reading, and being outdoors. She takes inspiration from the popular painting of “The Laughing Christ” — a photo of which she keeps in her office — and just enjoys making people smile and laugh.

“That reminds me to just keep smiling and keep going,” she says.

“I love working with people who are practicing the same faith as me. I have just enjoyed getting to know others and the camaraderie.”

— BERNICE CROCKER



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A Letter From Our Pastor

Stewardship Helps Us Endure the “Heat”

Dear Parishioners,

It is natural to think of July as a time for recharging. After all, isn't July the month most Americans would associate with the word “vacation”? Yes, Independence Day does provide a focus for the first part of the month, but then the rest of the month stretches ahead, seemingly empty of obligations for many of us.

The month of July also represents the relative sameness of a farmer's growing season. Like a farmer raising crops — having a busy spring planting season and a hectic fall harvest, with a long summer growing season in between — so it is with our lives. In our professional lives, completing our education, starting our careers, getting married, and beginning a family correspond with the planting season. Then, retirement, with the changes in our lives that come with it, is comparable to the harvest. But between the two lies 40 years of labor — for some people, these are years of exciting and fulfilling work, but for others, these are years of drudgery that seem to have no end. And just as the noonday sun of July shines the hottest, the “heat” of our working years can become overwhelming.

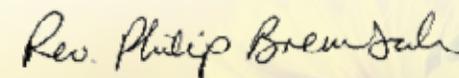
The same is sometimes true of our spiritual life. Most of us don't remember our Christian beginnings because we were baptized as infants. But all you have to do is see the joy and excitement in the faces of those to come into the Catholic Church at the Easter Vigil. Their spirits have been planted in the rich soil of grace from God and begin to sprout. The harvest we have to look forward to is eternal life with God in heaven. But between our baptism and our arrival at heaven, there are years of Christian

living. For most of us, there are peaks and valleys, high points of joy and low points of sin, with long stretches of spiritual plateau in between. And that's when the “heat” of the noonday sun seems to weaken our resolve to live for Christ.

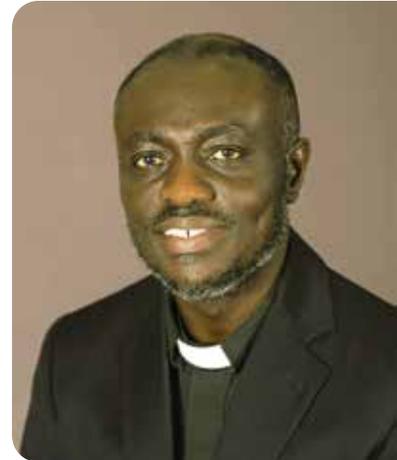
The best way to deal with that difficulty in the spiritual life is through the practice of stewardship. The commitments we make to devote some portion of our time, our talent, and our treasure to God guarantee that we come into contact with Him in regular worship and service. By maintaining our relationship with Him, we can grow in our trust in His love for us, so we do not need to fear “the scourge that lays waste” (Psalm 91) in the noon of our life's demands.

May God bless you and protect you this summer from all scourges, physical and spiritual. You'll be more prepared to experience His grace if you're at Mass each week.

Sincerely yours in Christ,



Fr. Philip Brembah
Pastor



STEPHEN MINISTRY

It may not be a formal term, but our parish's Stephen Ministry members could be called the "after" people.

"We're the people you call after the phone call you'd never want to get; after the funeral when everyone has left; after a relationship falls apart; after the doctor says, 'I'm sorry, there's nothing I can do,' and any of those situations that are a crisis to some," says Marilyn Dietrich, referral coordinator for the St. Vincent de Paul Parish Stephen Ministry.

The Stephen Ministry consists of trained lay people who provide one-on-one Christian care to individuals with

difficulties. The care is free and is available with just a phone call to Marilyn.

"A lot of times, people are hesitant to call and say, 'I need a Stephen Minister,'" Marilyn says. "It takes a lot of courage to do that."

When someone calls Marilyn after seeing her phone number in the weekly bulletin, she interviews them and answers any questions they have about the ministry. She explains what the ministry is, and isn't. She explains the confidentiality that is paramount in the ministry and seeks answers about why the person needs the help.

In normal times, the Stephen Minister will meet in person with a care seeker. However, under pandemic

restrictions, the meetings currently have been over the telephone. There currently are 14 active Stephen Ministers in our parish.

The care offered to those seeking help is important for several reasons.

"They're hurting and they're children of God," Marilyn says. "They need that cup of water. We stand in that spot as Jesus's hand and feet, offering the Works of Mercy, to *be* there to help them, walk with them. They need someone when the family says, 'It's time you snapped out of it!' They're someone not emotionally involved, who's empathetic, not sympathetic."

Prospective Stephen Ministers undergo 50 hours of training to acquire active listening skills and confidentiality.

"They realize that God is the cure-giver and the Stephen Minister is the care-giver," Marilyn says. "We learn how to pray with people, set boundaries. A Stephen Minister is not your best friend. We're there to listen and walk with you through this rough spot in life. We elicit what you are feeling, pray with you and *be there*. One of the most important things is to show up."

In Marilyn's experience, she has found that once the care receivers can name their feelings and their hurt, or emotion, they can begin the healing process. And it is the process that the Stephen Ministers work to develop, opening the care receiver to God's working on the result.



STEPHEN MINISTRY

Helps Open Path for God's Healing

“Whether it’s a divorce, death, loss of job, or a family situation, once they name that feeling, it can help,” she says. “We try to get them to name it and we pray with and for them to do that.”

While the care receivers benefit greatly from the help provided by the Stephen Ministers, the ministers themselves receive benefits in return.

“I’ve never worked with anyone that I didn’t get as much out of it as they did,” Marilyn says. “You feel God has placed you with another human being to walk with them and to guide them to a place of peace, and in reaching that place of peace, you yourself reach it.”

There are exceptions to the practice of confidentiality. For example, if a care receiver calls his or her Stephen Minister and threatens suicide or harm to another person, then law enforcement is notified to

handle the situation. If a person calls the minister and appears to be in a deep depression, the minister is trained to refer the person to mental health care service.

In some cases, an individual may already be seeing a mental health professional, but wants to receive Stephen Ministry care.

“We have a letter we send telling the professional that the patient is interested in Stephen Ministry care, and seek permission to provide it,” Marilyn says. “In most times, the professional says, ‘That’s fine.’”

The Stephen Ministry care can last from one month to a year or more. When the minister and the care receiver mutually feel that it has reached its natural conclusion, the care receiver can move on.

Training sessions for prospective Stephen Ministers take place when

there is a great enough number to schedule the sessions. Marilyn works with Maureen Vega in training those interested. In some cases, the training sessions are scheduled with those from other area parishes.

Besides providing one-on-one care, the ministry also offers a series of books, *Journeying Through Grief*, that are sent at intervals to our parishioners who have lost a loved one through death.

“We have received such a positive response to these books,” Marilyn says. “They are beautiful, wonderful books.”

Those interested in receiving Stephen Ministry care may call Marilyn at 817-457-1658. Her number is listed in the weekly bulletins, as well.

“It’s a beautiful ministry,” she says. “I wish more would take advantage of it.”

“They’re hurting and they’re children of God. They need that cup of water. We stand in that spot as Jesus’s hand and feet, offering the Works of Mercy, to be there to help them, walk with them.” — MARILYN DIETRICH

Those who would like more information about becoming a Stephen Minister may call Marilyn Dietrich at 817-457-1658.

ST. VINCENT DE PAUL

Highlights of Our 2021 Stewardship Renewal

Earlier this year, our parish leadership at St. Vincent de Paul conducted the 2021 Stewardship Renewal. The Stewardship Renewal gave our parish community the opportunity to discern how we are using our gifts of time, talent and treasure in service to the parish and in return to God.

This month, we are happy to share with you some of the highlights of the 2021 Stewardship Renewal.

- There were 310 commitment cards received from 26 percent of active households.
- There were 2,552 prayer commitments — the stewardship of time — from 92 percent of participating households.
- There were 1,006 ministry commitments — the stewardship of talent — from 79 percent of participating households. Of these, 108 were new ministry commitments, while 898 were re-commitments to parish ministries.
- There were 259 offertory commitments — the stewardship of treasure — from 84 percent of participating households. The average pledge was \$2,986.

We thank all those who participated in our 2021 Stewardship Renewal. If you did not have the opportunity to fill out and return a commitment card, we invite you to consider the ways you may share your gifts of time, talent and treasure with God and the parish community!

Time

Spending Time with God in Prayer

Prayer is the beginning of stewardship. On we spend time with God in prayer are we prepared to offer ourselves in service to others?

Please check the circle next to your commitments:

- Attend Mass every Sunday and Holy Day
- Attend weekday Mass at least once a week
- Invite a friend or acquaintance to Mass
- Pray together with my family
- Discuss our Catholic Faith with my children
- Read the Bible for a half hour a week
- Spend 15 minutes a day in personal prayer
- Pray the Rosary at least once a week
- Go to confession at least every other month
- Spend extra time with my spouse each day
- Pray for my country daily
- Pray for an increase in vocations
- Pray for our priests
- Pray for persecuted Christians
- Pray for life from conception to natural death
- Pray for those serving in the military
- Pray for fallen-away Catholics
- Spend time each week in Eucharistic Adoration
- Pray the Divine Mercy Chaplet once a week
- Pray for the Church during these difficult times

Stewardship THROUGH THE SAINTS

St. Vincent de Paul Catholic Church

2021 Commitment Card

First & Last Name _____

Phone _____

Email _____

Spouse: First & Last Name _____

Spouse: Phone _____

Spouse: Email _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ ZIP _____

After completion, please bring this card to Mass or mail using the envelope provided. Thank you and God bless you!

Treasure

Offeritory Gift

In thanksgiving for God's gifts, each household at St. Vincent de Paul is asked to give a specific percentage of income based on the biblical tithe.

5% to St. Vincent de Paul plus 1% to the diocese 4% to other charities

My Offeritory pledge to St. Vincent de Paul is _____

Percentage of household income:

Please complete either a weekly or monthly offertory:

Weekly gift \$ x52 = \$ annually

or

Monthly gift \$ x12 = \$ annually

Weekly giving based on proportion of income.

Weekly Giving Chart

Household Income	10%	5%	4%
\$0 - \$500	\$58	\$29	\$23
\$500 - \$1,000	\$96	\$48	\$38
\$1,000 - \$1,500	\$135	\$67	\$53
\$1,500 - \$2,000	\$192	\$96	\$77
\$2,000 - \$3,000	\$384	\$192	\$151

Stewardship THROUGH THE SAINTS

Stewardship Renewal 2021

St. Vincent de Paul Catholic Church

The Sacristan Ministry:

Humbly Serving and Savoring the Gift of the Mass

Since Mary Walton became Catholic in 1979, she has cherished a profound devotion to Our Lord in the Eucharist. Although the teaching of the Real Presence of Christ's Body, Blood, Soul, and Divinity was something new to her as a convert, she embraced it with all of her heart. Today, she lives out her love for the Eucharist by serving as a sacristan at our parish.

"It is such an honor to be a sacristan because you get to take care of the holy items that are used for Mass," she says. "It is a great way for me to serve God and do something for our parish community. It is an important part of my stewardship commitment."

Over the years, Mary has found that serving Christ with her talents brings joy to her heart and peace to her soul.

"There are so many reasons I really enjoy being a sacristan," Mary says. "It is a really special way to serve because it allows me to help prepare for the Sacrifice of the Mass. I also get to meet a lot of parishioners through this ministry. There are parish children who recognize me wherever I go — like at the grocery store — and tell me they know who I am. I love working with Father as well — he is such a wonderful priest. It is such a rewarding ministry."

Before the onset of the pandemic, the sacristans were responsible for a number of duties, such as setting up the altar, checking the tabernacle, counting the hosts that are to be consecrated, and cleaning the sacred vessels. Since the pandemic began, our parish priest has been taking care of most of these main duties, while the sacristans carry out the remaining duties, such as making sure handicapped persons receive Holy Communion, etc.

Several sacristans take turns serving at the various Masses. They are scheduled by Director of Stewardship and Ministry Renée Bader and trained by Mary.

The Sacristan Ministry is vital to the life of our parish community, as well as to the offering of the Mass. Although it is a simple ministry, it is one that may take much love and devotion. As St. Teresa of Calcutta once said, "Do small things with great love," and sacristans such as Mary believe that this is just what they are doing.

"This is a behind-the-scenes ministry because there are many people who do not realize what we do," Mary says.

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MASSES

Saturday Vigil: 5:30 p.m.

Sunday: 9 a.m. and 10:45 a.m.

Weekdays: (M/T/Th/Fr) 8:45 a.m. in the church
(Wed) 6:00 p.m. in the church

Holy Days: 8:45 a.m. and 7 p.m.

Confessions: Saturday: 4-5 p.m. in the chapel

The Sacristan Ministry continued from page 7

“Our purpose is to make sure that the Mass is able to run smoothly and properly.”

Moving forward, Mary hopes that this ministry will stay strong in future years.

“I am 78 years old, so I will only be able to do this ministry for another two or three years,” she says. “I want to train new people so they can take over this ministry in my place. We really need more young people to get involved.”

Those who would like to serve Our Lord in the Eucharist through this beautiful ministry may indicate their interest on their stewardship commitment card. For further information, please contact Mary Walton at 817-805-1674.

“There are so many reasons I really enjoy being a sacristan. It is a really special way to serve, because it allows me to help prepare for the Sacrifice of the Mass. I also get to meet a lot of parishioners through this ministry. There are parish children who recognize me wherever I go — like at the grocery store — and tell me they know who I am. I love working with Father as well — he is such a wonderful priest. It is such a rewarding ministry.” — MARY WALTON