

# Stewardship in Action at St. Bernard



## GENEROSITY COMES HOME TO ST BERNARD



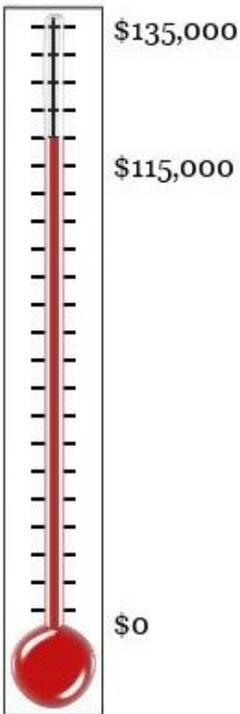
Every year, St. Bernard parishioners do their part as financial stewards of Christ by supporting the Bishop's Annual Appeal. They recognize the important work their contributions do at the Diocesan level and within communities in need within the Diocese, but some might not be aware of how our contributions also directly impact our local parish community here in Bridgewater.

Two main focuses of the Bishop's Appeal are charity and education, and in both these areas, our generosity comes back to serve us in very important ways. Appeal funds help to subsidize our Religious Education Program, specifically through training programs for our catechists. Appeal funds also are provided through Catholic Charities to augment our own Social Concerns funds, when we are called upon to provide help to parishioners in need, providing up to \$500 in emergency assistance to parishioners in financial need.

Another way that St. Bernard directly benefits from the Appeal is through support of vocations and the seminarians studying for the priesthood. The funds raised through the Appeal help to subsidize their formation and in turn, the seminarians spend time at our parish aiding in our ministry. Over the years, numerous seminarians have enriched the religious life of St. Bernard. Diaconate formation is also partially funded through the Diocese, which benefits our parish. Finally, through shared services provided by the Diocese, many administrative needs of our parish are met. Diocesan resources provide support in areas such as Human Resources, Information Technology and Risk Management.

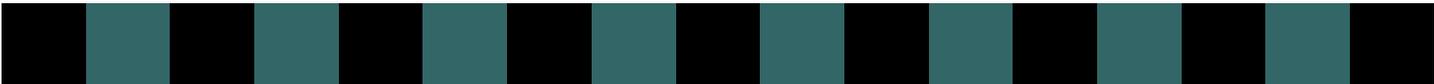
In his letter appealing to the people of the Diocese of Metuchen, our Bishop, the Most Rev. James F. Checchio, reminds us that "Our neighborhoods and homes, our parishes and schools, our hospitals and social agencies—everywhere that we go is affected by the faith and Christian values we have and give witness to through our actions." By donating to this year's appeal, you are making an impact that is felt in our immediate community, as well as throughout the Diocese.

As of last weekend, the parish has pledged 85 percent of our goal of \$135,000 for the Appeal, and the Diocese has raised over 5 million dollars towards its overall goal of 7.2 million dollars for 2018. There are three more weeks left in the Appeal. Please prayerfully consider how your donation can help right here at St. Bernard!



"Together we are promoting and nurturing vocations to the priesthood and religious life, strengthening marriages and families, and caring for the poor and vulnerable. With your help, we can continue to build effective faith formation and leadership programs, and bring Christ's saving message to all people through our renewed evangelization efforts and other important ministries."

Most Rev. James F. Checchio, Bishop, Diocese of Metuchen



---

## LEARNING ABOUT STEWARDSHIP—CONFIRMATION NIGHT

On Thursday, February 22nd approximately seventy-five 6th graders attended the Stewardship Council's annual Confirmation Night. The purpose of the event was to introduce our Confirmation candidates to the nature of Stewardship and to the many service opportunities here in our parish. Stacey Stefanski of the Stewardship Council opened the evening with a discussion on overall stewardship.

As part of their Confirmation preparation, our young parishioners are expected to perform acts of service in the parish as well as the community. The evening's program featured presentations by five different parish ministries that welcome service by the young people of our parish.

The following ministries provided overviews of service opportunities: Greg Bielat – Christian Services Commission, Darren Rydberg – CYM Basketball, Brad Imwalle – Young Builders' Club, Marie Cinque – S.H.I.P., and Taryn Ross and Max Renieris—Catechetical Formation.

Karen Dill, Parish Catechetical Leader at St Bernard was enthusiastic about the Stewardship Council's sponsorship of the event. "Thank you for witnessing to the young people and guiding them in stewardship. God bless you in your ministry."

The students left the event energized with new ways to serve God and the parish.

## STEWARDSHIP SAINT FOR MARCH—ST. FRANCES OF ROME

Francesca dei Roffredeschi was born in Rome in 1384, a time when the city was, arguably, at its worst. With a population of only about 25,000, it was no longer a center of power and international commerce. The popes had long departed to Avignon, France. The skyline was littered with the ruins of once spectacular structures. Wild animals ran free through the overgrowth dominating the city. At the age of 11, Francesca decided that she wanted to be a nun.

Instead, when Francesca was 13, her parents arranged for her to be married to the wealthy and aristocratic commander of the city's army. Her husband's family estate would be her home for the next 40 years and when her mother-in-law passed away, Francesca was entrusted with running the estate. She and her husband would have six children. The estate included her husband's brother and his family, and Francesca discovered that her sister-in-law shared her devout faith and passion to serve the less fortunate. Together they devoted themselves to ministering to the poor and the sick. Francesca and her sister-in-law even turned part of the family estate into a hospital and distributed food and clothing to the poor from there. In time, they inspired other women to join them in their ministry.



The papacy returned to Rome in 1420 and the city's revival would begin. In 1425, Francesca established a society of women committed to serving the sick and the poor. She employed the Rule of St. Benedict for the community, but without taking vows. They were known as the Oblates of Mary. Eight years later she established a convent for

the women who wished to live in the community and in the same year, they received papal approval to establish a formal religious congregation. The community eventually became known as the Oblates of St. Frances of Rome.

After her husband's death in 1436, Francesca herself entered the convent and became its superior until her own death on March 9, 1440. She was buried in the church now called Santa Francesca Romana, where her relics still rest and where there is a recumbent statue of her sculpted by Bernini.

St. Frances of Rome is the patron saint of widows and motorists. During her life, she is said to have had a recurring vision for several years of her guardian angel using a lantern to light the road in front of her when she drove her wagon, keeping her safe from hazards. It is thought that this may be the reason why she was named the patron saint of motorists by Pope Pius XI. Her feast day is March 9.

Excerpted and adapted with permission from the International Catholic Stewardship Council.

*Interested in learning more about the Stewardship Council?*

Contact Mark Dransfield (dransfam@gmail.com by calling 908-526-6649)

