



THE PASCHAL TRIDUUM: Entering into the Holiest Days of the Year

As Holy Week unfolds, the Church invites us into the most sacred days of the year — the Paschal Triduum. These days are not simply events to observe, but a single, prayerful journey meant to draw us more deeply into the heart of God's love.

"The Paschal Triduum is the three-day period that marks the end of Lent and commemorates the core events of Jesus Christ's passion, death, and resurrection," Fr. Anthony says. "Derived from the Latin word for 'three days,' it is considered a single, continuous liturgical celebration that unfolds the unity of Christ's Paschal Mystery.

"The Triduum is the summit and pinnacle of the entire liturgical year," he adds.

The Paschal Triduum begins on the evening of Holy Thursday with the Mass of the Lord's Supper, and continues through Good Friday with the Lord's Passion, and Holy Saturday with the Easter Vigil. It concludes on the evening of Easter Sunday, commemorating Jesus' Passion, Death, and Resurrection. These powerful events bring us to the heart of our Christian faith and reason for our hope in eternal life.

Each day imparts unique graces. Holy Thursday draws us into Christ's gift of Himself in the Eucharist and His call to humble service. Good Friday is marked by silence and

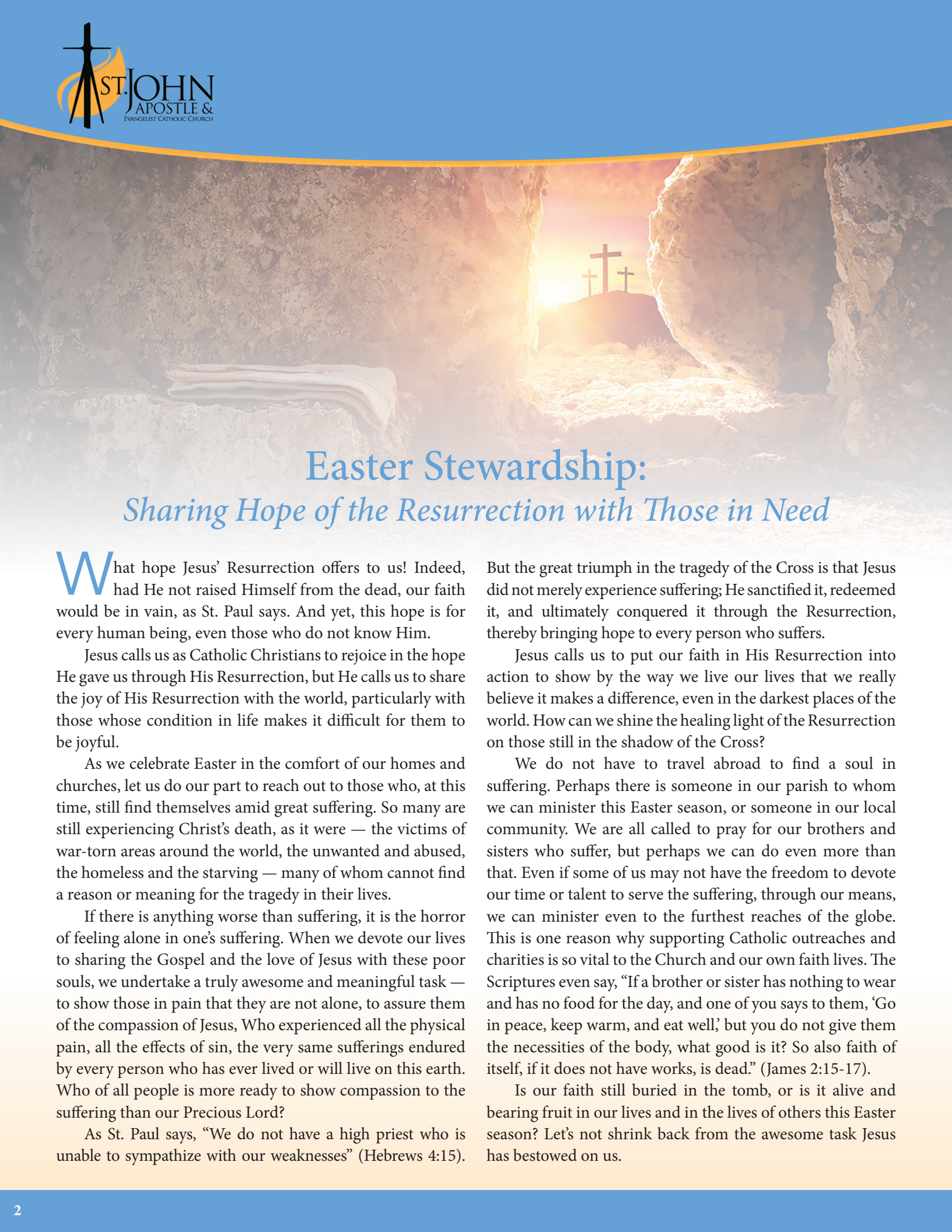


reverence as we venerate the cross and contemplate the depth of Christ's sacrifice. Holy Saturday is a day of waiting — quiet, prayerful, and full of longing — until night falls and the Easter Vigil begins.

The Easter Vigil stands at the heart of the Triduum. Fr. Anthony describes it as a powerful proclamation of hope where we celebrate the light of Christ, reflect on God's faithful acts of redemption throughout salvation history, and invite catechumens into the Church. Easter Sunday then bursts forth with joy, celebrating the resurrection that changes everything.

"Easter Sunday is the most important feast, celebrating Jesus Christ's resurrection from the dead, bringing spiritual

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Easter Stewardship: *Sharing Hope of the Resurrection with Those in Need*

What hope Jesus' Resurrection offers to us! Indeed, had He not raised Himself from the dead, our faith would be in vain, as St. Paul says. And yet, this hope is for every human being, even those who do not know Him.

Jesus calls us as Catholic Christians to rejoice in the hope He gave us through His Resurrection, but He calls us to share the joy of His Resurrection with the world, particularly with those whose condition in life makes it difficult for them to be joyful.

As we celebrate Easter in the comfort of our homes and churches, let us do our part to reach out to those who, at this time, still find themselves amid great suffering. So many are still experiencing Christ's death, as it were — the victims of war-torn areas around the world, the unwanted and abused, the homeless and the starving — many of whom cannot find a reason or meaning for the tragedy in their lives.

If there is anything worse than suffering, it is the horror of feeling alone in one's suffering. When we devote our lives to sharing the Gospel and the love of Jesus with these poor souls, we undertake a truly awesome and meaningful task — to show those in pain that they are not alone, to assure them of the compassion of Jesus, Who experienced all the physical pain, all the effects of sin, the very same sufferings endured by every person who has ever lived or will live on this earth. Who of all people is more ready to show compassion to the suffering than our Precious Lord?

As St. Paul says, "We do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses" (Hebrews 4:15).

But the great triumph in the tragedy of the Cross is that Jesus did not merely experience suffering; He sanctified it, redeemed it, and ultimately conquered it through the Resurrection, thereby bringing hope to every person who suffers.

Jesus calls us to put our faith in His Resurrection into action to show by the way we live our lives that we really believe it makes a difference, even in the darkest places of the world. How can we shine the healing light of the Resurrection on those still in the shadow of the Cross?

We do not have to travel abroad to find a soul in suffering. Perhaps there is someone in our parish to whom we can minister this Easter season, or someone in our local community. We are all called to pray for our brothers and sisters who suffer, but perhaps we can do even more than that. Even if some of us may not have the freedom to devote our time or talent to serve the suffering, through our means, we can minister even to the furthest reaches of the globe. This is one reason why supporting Catholic outreaches and charities is so vital to the Church and our own faith lives. The Scriptures even say, "If a brother or sister has nothing to wear and has no food for the day, and one of you says to them, 'Go in peace, keep warm, and eat well,' but you do not give them the necessities of the body, what good is it? So also faith of itself, if it does not have works, is dead." (James 2:15-17).

Is our faith still buried in the tomb, or is it alive and bearing fruit in our lives and in the lives of others this Easter season? Let's not shrink back from the awesome task Jesus has bestowed on us.

Approaching Lent with the Heart of a Steward

Dear Parishioners,

As we continue our journey through the season of Lent, a time of reflection, penance, and spiritual growth, I would like to remind you of the importance of examining our stewardship commitments of time, talent, and treasure. This period is not just about giving up certain luxuries, but also about deepening our faith, renewing our commitment to God, and serving others with a generous heart.

Time: Time is a precious gift from God, and how we use it reflects our priorities and values. During Lent, it is essential to allocate more time to prayer, reflection, and service. Consider setting aside moments for daily prayer and Scripture reading. Attend Mass regularly and engage in devotional practices that help you draw closer to God. Additionally, volunteer your time to help those in need within our community. Acts of charity and service are a meaningful way to spend your time during this season.

Talent: Each one of us possesses unique talents and abilities bestowed upon us by God. Lent is a perfect time to reflect on how we can use our talents to further God's kingdom. Consider sharing your talents with the parish and the broader community. Whether it's through participating in ministries, leading prayer groups, or offering your skills to those in need, your talents can be a source of blessing to



others and an expression of your commitment to God.

Treasure: The stewardship of our material resources is a vital aspect of our faith. During Lent, take a closer look at your financial commitments and how you can align them with your faith. Consider increasing your financial support to the parish and charitable organizations that serve those in need. Sacrificing a portion of your financial resources during Lent can be an act of solidarity with the less fortunate

and a way to live out the spirit of almsgiving.

Above all, I remind you to embrace a more profound connection with Christ during this holy season. Use this time to reflect on the significance of Lent and how your stewardship can be a living expression of your faith and love for God.

May this Lenten season be a time of spiritual growth and transformation, as we examine and strengthen our stewardship commitments in the spirit of prayer, fasting, and almsgiving. May we draw closer to God and one another, as we journey towards the joy of Easter.

Sincerely,

Fr. Anthony Rapozo

Fr. Anthony Rapozo

Pastor



A LOOK AT THE Order of Christian Initiation of Adults



“The OCIA process has had a significant impact on participants by fostering a deeper relationship with God and the Church community.” — Deacon Romeo Ganibe

Some people are born, baptized, and raised in the Catholic faith — as “cradle Catholics” — while others seek the truth of our faith later in life. If someone is interested in becoming Catholic or has questions about the faith, the Order of Christian Initiation of Adults process, or OCIA, is a great place to seek answers. Here at St. John Apostle and Evangelist, we have OCIA meetings throughout the year to prepare those who wish to receive the sacraments in the Church.

“OCIA is a gradual process of conversion and initiation into the Catholic Christian community, providing individuals the space to encounter God and respond to His invitation to a new way of life in the Catholic faith,” Deacon Romeo Ganibe says.

OCIA, formerly known as the Rite of Christian Initiation for Adults, was established following the Second Vatican Council in the mid-1960s. The process seeks to walk with people in various circumstances — those who have

never been baptized and wish to receive the Sacraments of Initiation, those who were baptized in another Christian denomination and wish to be received into full communion with the Catholic Church by receiving the Sacraments of Confirmation and Eucharist, and baptized Catholics who have not completed their initiation by receiving the Sacraments of Confirmation and Holy Communion.

“The OCIA ministry is crucial for the Catholic Church as it provides a structured and supportive process for individuals to become full members of the Church,” Deacon Romeo says. “It ensures that each person’s journey is guided by the Church’s teachings and practices, fostering a deeper understanding of the faith and community.”

The process is flexible, allowing participants to grow and receive the sacraments as they are ready to do so. Deacon Romeo says this approach prepares the participants for full communion while strengthening their commitment to

Adults *Accompanying Souls on the Journey into the Catholic Faith*

the Church and their faith. The program also respects the personal faith journey of the participants. While it is dependent in part upon the person's individual circumstances, the process itself is structured.

The OCIA process includes four phases, during which the participants learn about the faith, participate in prayer and study, and receive the sacraments at the Easter Vigil. This process helps the participants' entrance into the Church, allowing them to be prepared before they take this significant step.

"The OCIA process has had a significant impact on participants by fostering a deeper relationship with God and the Church community," Deacon Romeo says.

While the OCIA process aims to prepare the candidates and catechumens, the sponsors also tend to learn more about the Catholic faith, too, and can develop a deeper understanding and appreciation for it as they teach it to others.

Deacon Romeo enjoys both witnessing the faith journeys

of those who participate, as well as sharing the faith with them.

"Being involved in this ministry as OCIA coordinator, I express deep joy in accompanying participants as they explore, deepen, and ultimately embrace the Catholic faith, seeing their transformation and growth over time," he says. "Being a part of the evangelization process and helping participants connect with God and the Church is a significant source of fulfillment for me as I'm passionate about my own faith."

This upcoming Easter, there are 20 catechumens who will receive the Sacraments of Initiation, and seven candidates seeking full communion with the Church. Our parish family looks forward to welcoming these newest members into our flock!

All are welcome to join the OCIA sessions, whether you have received the sacraments and wish to dive deeper into the faith, or if you have yet to receive any or some of the sacraments. There are also ongoing opportunities for volunteers to teach or become a catechist.

For more information, contact the parish office at 808-623-3332.

The Paschal Triduum *continued from front cover*

rebirth and new life in God's Kingdom," Fr. Anthony says.

While the Church's liturgies are rich and beautiful, Fr. Anthony reminds us that entering the Triduum well is less about understanding every detail and more about opening our hearts. He encourages parishioners and families to slow down and pray.

"They can meditate on Christ's sacrifice by practicing Lectio Divina, praying the Rosary, attending Eucharistic Adoration, making small sacrifices — fasting from screens/sweets — and performing acts of charity," he says.

These small, faithful practices help us stay close to Jesus during these days. Time set aside for family prayer, walking the Stations of the Cross, or even sitting quietly with the Lord can shape the Triduum into something deeply personal and transformative.

The Triduum is also, at its core, a message of hope.

"The Triduum is a source of Christian hope because it

reveals God's ultimate love and victory over sin and death," Fr. Anthony says.

Even Good Friday, with all its sorrow, carries profound meaning. It is "good" because Jesus's death as the Lamb of God seals our salvation, making the darkness of the Cross the necessary prelude to Easter's light.

As we enter these holy days, the Church invites us not to rush ahead to Easter morning, but to walk patiently with Christ — through love, sacrifice, silence, and hope. In doing so, we allow God's redeeming love to renew our hearts and remind us that no darkness is stronger than the light of the Resurrection.

"The Triduum is a source of Christian hope because it reveals God's ultimate love and victory over sin and death."

— Fr. Anthony

The Healing Power of Confession:

A Guide to Preparing for the Sacrament of Reconciliation

The Sacrament of Reconciliation, often known as confession, is a cornerstone of the Catholic faith. It provides us with an opportunity to seek forgiveness for our sins and reconcile with God. This essential sacrament is a powerful way to renew our spiritual journey, and proper preparation is key to making a good confession.

Confession is more than just admitting our sins; it is a sacred encounter with God's mercy and love. Through this sacrament, we acknowledge our human frailty and seek God's forgiveness, allowing us to start anew with a clean slate. It's a moment to rekindle our relationship with Christ and grow spiritually.

Preparing for Confession

- **Examination of Conscience:** Before confession, take time for self-examination. Reflect on your actions, thoughts, and words since your last confession. A thorough examination of conscience helps identify the sins that need to be confessed.
- **Sorrow for Sins:** Genuine contrition is essential. Sorrow for sins should come from the heart and a desire for true repentance. Recognize the harm your sins may have caused and your intention to avoid them in the future.
- **Make a List:** Consider making a list of your sins to guide you during the confession. This list can help you remember all the sins you wish to confess, ensuring a thorough examination.

Approaching the Confessional

Entering the confessional can be intimidating but remember that the priest is there to guide you through the process with compassion and understanding.

- **Begin with the Sign of the Cross:** When you enter the confessional, start with the sign of the cross, invoking

the Holy Trinity. This gesture signifies your intention to confess your sins.

- **Confession:** Begin your confession by stating your sins. Start with the most serious ones and then proceed to the others. Be honest, straightforward, and specific. For example, instead of saying, "I was mean to someone," specify the incident, such as, "I spoke hurtful words to a family member."
- **Listen to the Priest:** After you've confessed your sins, the priest may offer guidance or ask questions for clarification. Listen attentively and respond honestly.
- **Accepting the Penance:** The priest will assign a penance, which may involve prayers, acts of kindness, or other spiritual exercises. Accept this penance with a willing heart and a commitment to complete it.
- **Act of Contrition:** The priest will then ask you to recite an act of contrition, expressing your sorrow and commitment to avoid sin. You can use a traditional act of contrition or speak from your heart.

Receiving Absolution

After your act of contrition, the priest will absolve you from your sins in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. At this moment, your sins are forgiven, and you are reconciled with God.

The Sacrament of Reconciliation is a profound way to experience God's mercy and grace. Approach it with humility and a sincere desire for spiritual renewal. Through proper preparation and heartfelt confession, you can embrace this sacrament as a means of drawing closer to God and leading a life more in accordance with His teachings. Remember that the priest is there to assist you and be a conduit of God's mercy, and your confession should always remain confidential.

Highlights of Our 2025 Stewardship Renewal

Stewardship Begins With Love

This past autumn, our parish leadership at St. John Apostle and Evangelist conducted the 2025 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 2025 Stewardship Renewal.

- There were 242 commitment cards received from 34 percent of active households.
- There were 2,295 prayer commitments — the stewardship of time — from 95 percent of participating households.
- There were 610 ministry commitments — the stewardship of talent — from 75 percent of participating households. Of these, 164 were new ministry commitments, while 446 were re-commitments to parish ministries.
- There were 171 offertory commitments — the stewardship of treasure — from 71 percent of participating households. The average pledge was \$2,472.

We thank all those who participated in our 2025 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!

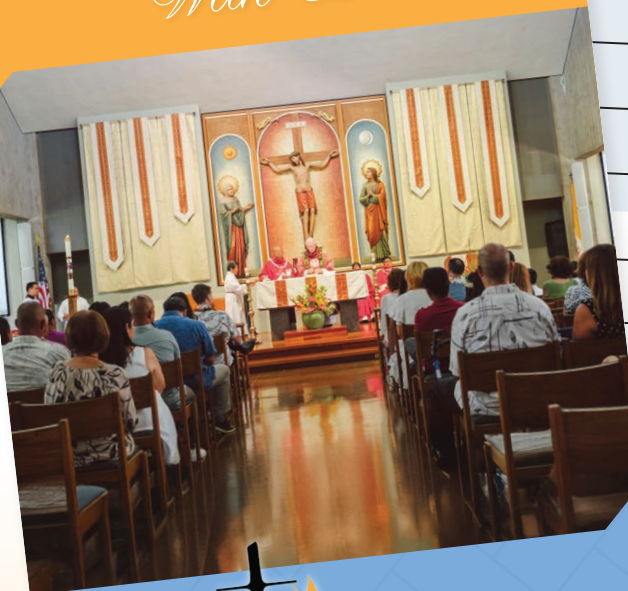
Stewardship Begins With Love



2025 Commitment Card
St. John Apostle & Evangelist

2025 STEWARDSHIP RENEWAL

Stewardship Begins With Love



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The Annunciation of the Lord

Celebrating the Moment God Became Flesh

The Solemnity of the Annunciation of the Lord is observed on March 25. This feast celebrates the “announcement” that God has chosen Mary, a virgin, to bear His only Son and marks the moment that God became flesh within Mary’s womb nine months before the Nativity of the Lord in December.

A Solemnity is a feast of the highest order in the church calendar — they include all Sundays and Holy Days of Obligation. The Annunciation was elevated to a Solemnity as part of the liturgical reforms of 1969. Throughout the church year, there are 17 feasts dedicated to Mary and three of them, Mary, Mother of God (January 1), The Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary (August 15), and The Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin

Mary (December 8), are Holy Days of Obligation.

Luke’s Gospel gives the only account of the Annunciation. Mary is not only the recipient of God’s grace and favor — she was also chosen from the beginning. Church dogma holds that Mary was born without the stain of original sin. She was chosen to be the pure vessel of the incarnation.

The events of the Annunciation also show Mary to be a model Christian disciple. Her selfless “yes” to God is an example for all ages. Mary’s role, not only as Mother of God but also as the first disciple of her Son, Jesus, exemplifies her participation in His salvific work. She is a bridge between the human and the divine, and we turn to her as a true model of faith. Her courage, her faith, and her witness should help to strengthen us all.

