

Cover Article
June 8, 2008

Seven Signs of a
Stewardship Parish

- 1 Prayer
- 2 Hospitality
- 3 Accountability
- 4 Outreach
- 5 Renewal & Commitment
- 6 Lay Witness
- 7 Stewardship Committee

A healthy Stewardship parish has hospitality as a priority. All parishioners, new and present, are welcomed and made to feel comfortable at all parish activities, including liturgies. All need a sense that they and their talents are valuable and contributing. The parish needs to present an image and a reality that they are friendly and welcoming like Christ.

As a new member to the parish in the last five months, I can attest that many parishioners have made me feel welcomed. But I am a middle-aged white male with a professional position on the staff. I am an easy person to be friendly toward. Are we as welcoming to all who visit us? Would I have been treated differently if I was homeless, and it had been a while since I had bathed? Would I have been treated differently if I dressed in Muslim approved garb? Would a distraught single mother with misbehaving children have been treated hospitably? If I had numerous body piercings and numerous tattoos on my body, would I have been treated differently? Can we overcome our prejudices to serve the least among us as Jesus has modeled for us?

Father Bob can be complimented for pushing our Bridging program, which reaches out to our neighbors in a hospitable way. He also has us out in the community through the ministerial association of pastors (look for an ice cream social in August). He has spearheaded the Feed Our Starving Children initiative in our parish, with a major event in the fall. He challenged us in a May homily to not forget the thousand or so parishioners who come only once or twice a year. He was preaching a message a spiritual hospitality and healing for these children of God. We are blessed to have a leader like Father Bob who eats with sinners and tax collectors and inspires us to overcome our prejudices to make all welcome in God's house. Let us open our hearts and minds to be hospitable to all who encounter us on our journey!