



**STELLA MARIS PARISH**  
OUR LADY "STAR OF THE SEA"™

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Dear Fellow Parishioners of Stella Maris Parish,

June 9, 2017

With our newest mission/vision statements in mind, our leadership has been focusing our parish on the gospel imperative of discipleship. Discipleship is expressed in different ways but one of the most important and practical is in being good stewards. Contrary to popular belief, parish financial support is not equivalent to stewardship. In working on our mission, we realize how essential financial sharing is but it is still just one part.

Stewardship involves giving ourselves completely to Jesus Christ (our whole heart, mind, soul, spirit, and body). We follow him so that his mission can be accomplished in the world. Spending our money for the sake of the gospel can be the easiest part of giving ourselves to God's purposes. What really takes personal resolve, commitment and energy is giving the rest of ourselves to God. The early Christians gave their lives as witnesses and martyrs. Would we be willing to do that? Is our relationship with the Lord as deep, strong, and meaningful as it could be? What are we holding back so that we are not totally with His and His work?

The primary goal of discipleship as lived in good stewardship is to grow deeply in love with Jesus Christ so we can fulfill all that God the Father has in mind for us with the help of the Holy Spirit. God desires that we repent and believe in the good news personally so that we can preach the good news ourselves to all people, bringing them into a relationship with the Lord individually and communally. This church is always charged with and in the process of building the kingdom of God which ultimately transforms the world by means of the power of God's love. Just as biological living involves eating, drinking, sleeping and physical movement; good stewardship involves grateful prayer, spiritual growth, goodness of life, utilizing our gifts and talents to serve the Lord and generously sharing our financial resources.

As baptized Catholics who are committed to Stella Maris Parish, I know I can count on you to grow in your commitment to Jesus Christ as a good disciple and steward. Through that commitment which we live into every week as we participate in the Eucharist; we experience how much God loves us. The great love which God has for us still needs our cooperation for it to be effective within us, forming us into all that God wants us to be. Please respond to this invitation as the good disciple that you are so that you can become even a better disciple.

On the other side of this letter, I have spelled out more clearly my expectations as pastor. Our stewardship drive begins the last weekend of June. I hope I do a good job of not only challenging you but also empowering you to be what God hopes for you. If there is anyone who is unclear after reading this letter or hearing what I say, do not be afraid to ask.

In Christ's love,

Fr. Dave Ruby, Pastor

# Stella Maris Parishioner Expectations

## GOD

### **1. Accept God's grace unconditionally.**

God loves us perfectly and abundantly, more than we can ever know. We are limited, inadequate creatures of God who do not deserve anything and have been given everything. We need to acknowledge that we cannot do anything on our own and need God to make us what we need to be through his intervention and help.

### **2. Be Grateful for what God has done for us.**

The only appropriate response to all that God is and does for us is to thank him profusely and always for all that our lives are because of him.

## Prayer (as the main expression of our gratitude to God)

### **3. Spend 15 minutes in personal prayer a day at home**

### **4. Spend one hour a month with me in church during the scheduled times.**

## Spiritual Growth

### **5. Participate in the Sacrament of reconciliation, at least once a year, preferably twice or however many times are helpful**

This sacrament more than any other opens us up to God's grace as we acknowledge we are sinful & unable to do anything spiritual ourselves since we need to be saved and sanctified by God. With its help, spiritual growth becomes more possible and prevalent.

### **6. Prayer partner**

Each person chooses another person to journey with him/her spiritually. The two meet monthly to pray together, share their lives and spiritual experiences and they not only listen and affirm but grow and develop their faith lives better together. More information and guidance will be given when needed.

### **7. Small group involvement**

Every member of the parish should be forming themselves by personal reading and reflection but also by participating in a small group of 6-8 people who together study scripture and other spiritual/theological matters which help their faith to deepen. More information and guidance will be given when needed.

## Good living

### **8. Love others**

### **9. Love especially those who need it most**

## Utilize gifts and talents in service to

### **10. Serve the parish in a ministry which helps us to worship together.**

### **11. Serve in some other ministry to help the parish accomplish its mission.**

## Generously sharing financial resources

### **12. Donate 2.5% (1 hour of every 40 worked) of income to the parish for accomplishing our mission.**