

The Stewardship Journey

STEWARDSHIP '79 UNDER WAY

Hundreds of volunteers in 21 parishes throughout the diocese will begin visits to fellow-parishioners on Sunday, Oct. 14.

It will mark the second year of the project titled a "Christian Stewardship Program for Parishes."

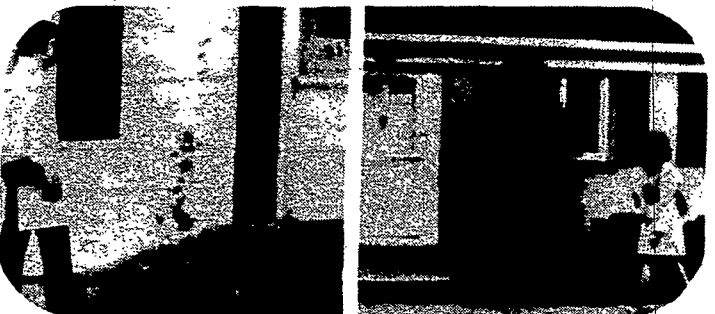
Sponsored by the Diocesan Stewardship Office, the program is offered annually to

parishes on a cooperative basis, with a sharing of costs for literature, slide presentations and other materials. The office also conducts workshops to train committee leaders.

Preparations begin in June, with the parish Planning Group determining objectives and enlisting leadership for the Home Visit Group. Volunteers are recruited and trained in September through mid-October. The third phase of the program is organization of a Follow-up Group.



Training meetings for volunteers . . .



preparing them for the home visits . . .



meeting fellow-parishioners . . .



in a spirit of neighborliness . . .



to discuss new ways to share . . .



in a stronger parish family

The home visit — an opportunity to care and share

Many benefits have been evidenced as a result of the Stewardship visits to parishioners.

While many persons are active in parish activities and have a wide acquaintanceship with fellow-parishioners, there are many others for whom the visit by the stewardship volunteer may be the only direct contact they have all year.

Volunteers in last year's program have described the visits as "most enjoyable ... stimulating ... very productive." In addition to making new acquaintances, the interviews provide parishioners with the opportunity to praise or criticize parish programs and to make specific suggestions about parish operations.

Besides developing a more Christian perspective about sharing, the visits keep parishioners better informed about parish programs, allow otherwise hidden or unused leadership to surface for parish committee roles, and broaden the level of parishioner interest — which often results in more consistent parish support.

Noting that the visitors are giving their time for the program, parishes have asked parishioners to receive them kindly and with a spirit of neighborly friendliness. Testimony of the enthusiasm resulting from the visits is evidenced in the following quotes from parishes which participated in the 1978 program:

Pastor, Small Suburban Parish, Monroe County - "It certainly did promote communication ... People knew we were interested enough in them to come out and talk with them."

Secretary, Medium-size Rural Parish, Outside Monroe Co. - "The benefits are overwhelming! We have a more unified parish — everyone seems friendlier and speaks more freely to others when coming and going at church services. We all have made many new friends and I'm sure a lot of these relationships will be lasting."

Parish Council, Small Rural Parish, Outside Monroe Co. - "The one thing we probably derived that makes the entire program worthwhile — communications. We learned quite a bit via the workers what the parishioners' likes and dislikes have been. We also found out a lot more people will help if (and only if) they are asked."

Secretary, Small Rural Parish, Outside Monroe Co. - "We feel the personal contact with our parishioners was very rewarding. The majority of the workers reported being very well received. Many parishioners opened up with comments and different needs. I feel our parishioners are now more aware of what is happening in our parish."

Parish Council, Medium-size Parish, Outside Monroe Co. - "We became aware of a new spirit of parish just from the community of volunteers involved. It did our hearts good just to see people working so cheerfully for the parish. There were new faces as well as old that hadn't been seen in a long time."

Pastor, Medium-size Urban Parish, Monroe Co. - "A real community and sense of parish dedication was established just in bringing together workers for the program. Our parish asked for comments from

parishioners — this helped to illuminate the questions and problems of our people."

Parish Council, Small Rural Parish, Monroe Co. - "Our parish finally has been together through a common cause, our own need only for each other but for the parish as a whole."

'Love Thy Neighbor . . .

One principal aim of the Stewardship program is to motivate parishioners to agree to return to God of their time, talent and treasure, through the love of the benefit of others. Your parish family needs you.

What can be done to help the youth, the elderly, the poor, the lonely, the handicapped? What can be done about the education of children, about the decline in church attendance and in religious vocations? What can be done to make the parish community more effective?

These challenges must be faced not just by the dedicated few — but by all in the parish family.



Serving on parish committees



Caring for the despondent

Visiting the elderly



Religious education of children