

# Another Year to Serve the Lord

## *Becoming a Total Stewardship Parish*

Dear faithful Parishioners,

In 2012, *St. Peter Catholic Church* embarks on its 169<sup>th</sup> year of proclaiming Christ in word and sacrament. As we prepare for another year of witnessing to the Good News of the Gospel and serving the spiritual and temporal needs of the people of God, it is fitting that we take time to reflect upon our parish's rich history as the earliest Catholic Church of the *Archdiocese of New Orleans* on the Northshore. And, when considering our annual financial commitment to *St. Peter Parish*, it is also fitting that we reflect on the many devoted parishioners who went before us, who gave birth to our parish and nurtured it over these many years.



We are the beneficiaries of our ancestors' commitment to Christ as manifested through their generous donations of time, talent and treasure. As beneficiaries, we have a stewardship responsibility to emulate our predecessors by ensuring *St. Peter's* on-going presence and continuing vitality and viability. Moreover, our stewardship responsibility is not just to those who went before us, but to those generations who will follow us. Most importantly, however, fulfilling our stewardship responsibility is a reflection of our relationship with God.

One excellent description of stewardship is the use of God-given resources for the accomplishment of Christ-centered objectives. In other words, stewardship is managing everything God brings into our life in a manner that honors Him as it strengthens our relationship with Christ.

References to stewardship are scattered throughout Sacred Scripture, but it is apparent from many of these passages that stewardship begins and ends with the understanding of God's ownership of all. This concept is perhaps best summarized in Psalm 24:1: *The earth is the Lord's, and everything in it, the world, and all who live in it.*

This passage makes it clear that we do not own the wealth God has blessed us with; we are merely caretakers of it. Caring for God's gifts – and sharing them – is what stewardship is all about. When approached from this perspective, stewardship is not an onerous obligation, but a joyous expression of thanksgiving and an opportunity to use the gifts God has given us to do the work God is calling us to do.

Serving as an instrument of God, *St. Peter Parish* enables each parishioner to answer God's call by:

- Blessing us with the sacraments of the Church
- Offering a variety of ministries through which to serve God
- Providing catechesis for children, teenagers, and adults

- Nurturing a vital Catholic family in which to share in God's love and grace.

As members of this parish, each of us is charged with ensuring that *St. Peter Catholic Church* is able to continue to serve as God's instrument. Each of us is charged not with giving, but with giving *back*.

I extend a humble and heartfelt "thank you" for your continued generosity to our parish. All gifts are to God and, as such, are accepted with love and thanksgiving. As you continue to discern your financial support of our parish, please keep in mind the role *St. Peter Catholic Church* plays in your relationship with Jesus Christ. Ask yourself if you have taken full advantage of the opportunities that the parish provides to serve and worship God as well as to serve all of God's children. Then, after prayerful consideration, ask yourself if what you are giving back to God is an accurate reflection of His role in your life.

May God bless you and your family for your generous support of our parish and its over seventy ministries!

*Fr. Cooper*