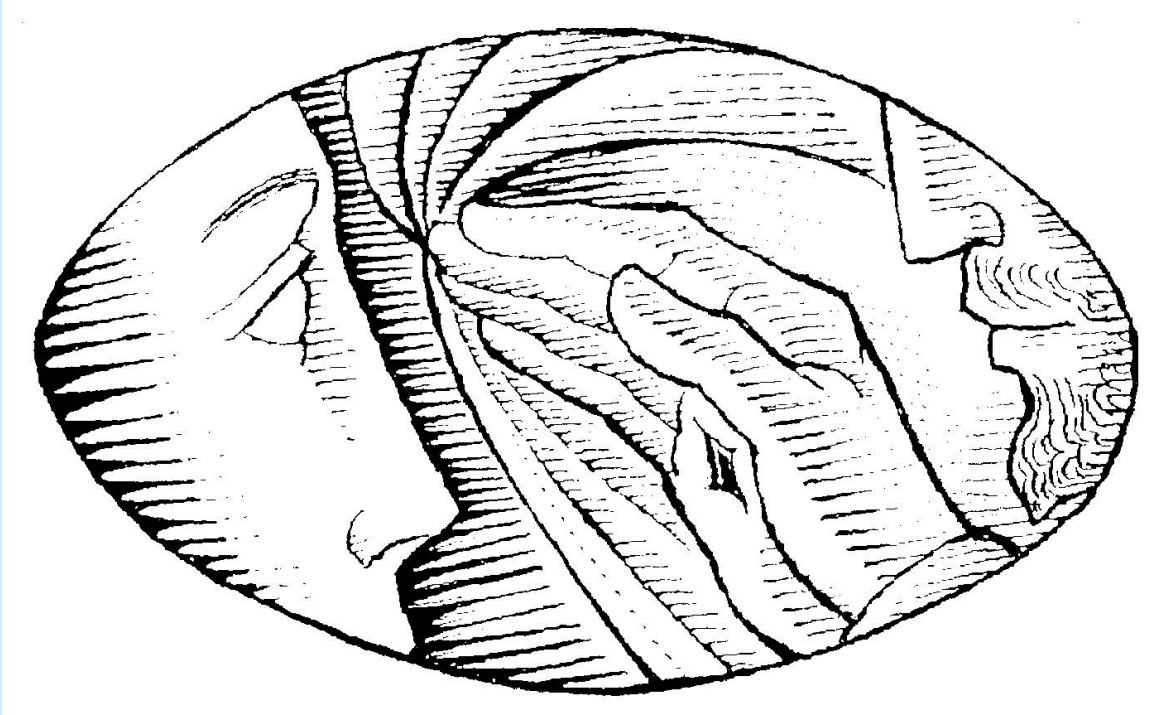


LIFE IN CHRIST

A pastoral statement on
Sacramental Life



*The goal of St. Ann Parish
is that each member
grow in Grace through Jesus Christ
and in so doing
cooperate with the Holy Spirit
in giving Glory to God,
in experiencing the
salvation of their soul,
and in building up the Body of Christ.*

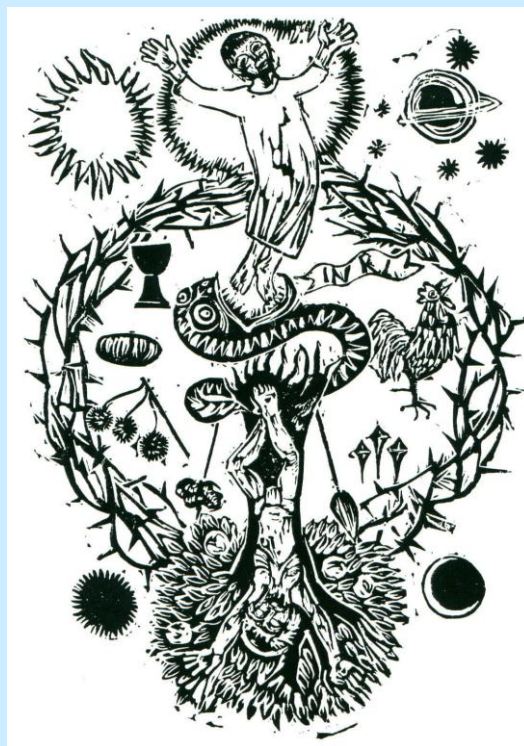
The Mystery

St. Irenaeus taught, “The glory of God is a human being who is fully alive; however, life that is fully human requires the capacity to see God.”

How can we see God? We can learn to see God by way of mystery. Have you ever heard yourself say, “Do you see what I’m saying?” Have you ever “read between the lines”? Have you “seen below the surface”? Then you are already familiar with the way of mystery, a word whose origin suggests something we perceive by moving beyond eyesight into insight.

The fundamental mystery of Christianity is the Paschal Mystery — the life, death, resurrection and ascension of Jesus the Christ.

Jesus is the image of the invisible God. Jesus reveals not only God to us, but us to ourselves, since we have been created in the image of the Trinity. We can move away from emptiness and toward fulfillment to the extent that we live according to our true, Godly nature.



The Mysteries

Through the celebration of the Christian Mysteries — the seven sacraments — we enter into and participate in Jesus’ life, death, resurrection and ascension: the Paschal Event.

In the sacraments, God uses the created world to open up to us a reality that is beyond the one that can be perceived with our senses. This encounter has the power to transform us. In the reverent celebration of the sacraments our full, active and conscious incorporation into Christ the Person and Christ the Process happens most especially.



“The seven sacraments touch all the stages and all the important moments of Christian life: they give birth and increase, healing and mission to the Christian’s life of faith.”

Catechism of the Catholic Church #1210

Linking Liturgy and Life

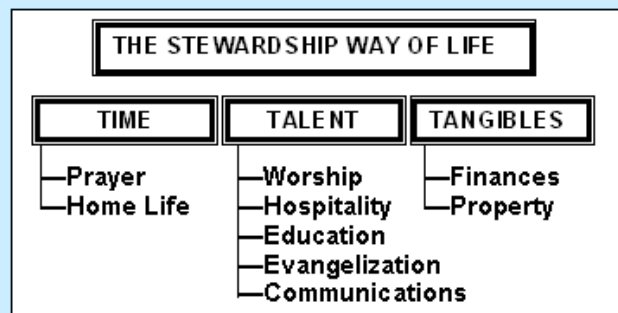
The practice of the Stewardship Way of Life is the chief tool our parish is using to highlight the link between liturgy and life, between ritual and renewal of parish life, between cult and the choices we make each day.

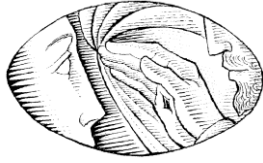


Through stewardship, we are invited to evaluate how we are building up the Body of Christ in our homes and our community by reflecting on the way we use our time, energy, and material resources. In developing our religious imagination our religious

life becomes enriched and the connections between ceremony and life become keener and clearer.

Our very lives are intended to be sacramental — that is, visible signs of the invisible reality of our relationship with God.





Can You See What I'm Saying?

Listen to this song and see if you like it.

Taste this cake, and see if you want this for your wedding.

I want to see how that other tile sample feels to the touch.

Sample these perfumes, and see which one you prefer.

I'm going to watch that new film, and see what I think of it myself.

Perception & Knowledge

St. Thomas Aquinas taught that we cannot know anything that does not come into us by way of our senses. Our knowledge of spiritual realities (love, truth, beauty, grace, God) is based in and comes out of our experience of the material world through our five senses. We extrapolate. We connect the dots. We come to see, to know.

This is what St. Irenaeus meant when he spoke of the capacity to see God. This is what Antoine de St. Exupery meant when he wrote that “It is only with the heart that one sees rightly.” This is what St. Paul was referring to as he wrote, “May the Lord enlighten the eyes of your heart, that you may know....” (Ephesians 1:18). This is the point and the purpose of all the Sacramental Preparation Ministries in St. Ann Parish.

Parish Sacramental Preparation Ministries

- RCIA Team
- Pre-Jordan Team (Baptism)
- First Penance Team
- First Holy Communion Team
- Confirmation Team
- Cana Team (Marriage)
- Pastoral Ministry to the Sick (Anointing)

Perception As Transformation

Who we are colors what we can see, and what we see shapes who we are. In becoming able to recognize God in my life, I am allowing grace to transform me into the kind of person who is able to be with God, to receive and to share in the gift of the very Life of the Trinity.

The drama of our lives is how we are transformed (or not) by grace into saints, for only a saint can see God without distortion, can “enjoy the Beatific Vision.”

This necessary transformation, which can take place in this life or in the next, will free us from any attachments that impair our vision of the Trinity.



The Sacraments, worthily received by those who are prepared, are our greatest helps to being transformed into saints, into **seers**, into persons who are able to see God face to face, to know God, to love God, and to join in the joyous service of praise which is Heaven.

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