

Stewardship of Finance Reflection

By Jodi Barron

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Good evening/morning.

A few weeks ago I received a phone message from Father Val. He did not mention on the message what he was calling me about but just asked for a returned call. For about 2 and ½ days we played a round of phone tag-just couldn't seem to reach one another at the right time. As the missed calls and voice mails accumulated, I had time to wonder about what was the reason behind his call. I really wasn't sure but had a few guesses: maybe he wanted one or two of our boys to serve at an upcoming Christmas Mass; maybe he wanted me to join a committee; or, I was afraid, maybe it was about that mass a few weeks prior, that one that I arrived to DURING the homily, maybe I was busted. If you don't know or haven't heard him talk about it before you SHOULD know: He sees everything from up here.

Anyway, I really wasn't sure why he had reached out to me. So on Christmas Eve, after the very beautiful and moving 5pm service, Fr. Val came up to me and we finally had a chance to speak. So what was it??? This. He wanted me to be here today, to prepare some words and speak to you all about the Stewardship of Finance. ..Yikes. That was the first thing that went through my head. Finances.... Yikes. I don't like to talk about money and certainly really, really don't like to ask people for money. So I can only imagine what my face looked like as Father ask this of me. It wasn't one of excitement.

However I think he knew he had me. I mean how can anyone say no to Fr Val on Christmas Eve. The Stewardship of Finance, that's a tough one.

So what does it mean, the Stewardship of Finance. I had to think about this. At first I thought I should ask the parish administration and find out what were the talking points, what were the details and specifics of the message they wanted communicated. However, I decided against this because that wouldn't be my message. I felt the only way I could get up here and talk about finances with any level of comfort was to just share with you some of my thoughts on what it means to participate in the financial aspect of the ministry here at IC.

First of all, let me share with you a little about my family. My husband Matt and I have 3 boys and we are parishioners as well as parents of the school. Our boys Brett, Luke and Shane have attended ICCS for all of their primary education and are currently in 6th, 4th and 2nd grades respectively. So it was 7 ½ years ago, when our oldest started Kindergarten here, that we first became part of IC. A few years later we decided to make a switch and become parishioners as well. There was one thing that was very clear during our initial experiences here, those years ago, and that is that IC is a community. It is a community made up of people that join together in worship, that join together in education, that join together in ministry and outreach. Now this is no novel idea. People have been forming communities since the beginning of mankind. It is in our nature. In our second reading today we heard the beginning of the letter St Paul wrote to the church, the community, he had started in Corinth. These Corinthians were a community, a group of people that were special, that had been called upon. Of course, they were not without their problems, but they were a community. A community that worshiped together, just like us here at IC.

There is a comfort in community. Sometimes we don't realize it until we need it. We don't realize it until we are having a difficult time and need support, when we need relief. Have you ever felt that way? Have you ever walked through those doors, needing some relief, and found it. Have you found that feeling of comfort here when you needed it. I know I have, have you? Have you experienced that feeling of needed comfort, like a warm blanket being wrapped around you on a cold day. A comfort in having a church that is also a home. I personally cherish being a part of this community, this home.

That is what IC is to me. Home.

I am willing to guess, that I am not alone in my feelings. I'm willing to believe that there are others here today that feel the same way, that IC is a home to them too. A home that is open and welcoming to anyone that chooses to walk through those doors. A place to join together in worship, in education in ministry and outreach. A home that provides a place for reflection, a place to meet up with friends, a place to be part of a community. It is a place, that needs to be taken care of. We have to take care of our community, our home.

So here we are, that dreaded topic. There is no way around it, no way to disguise the message, no way to avoid the point that needs to be communicated. In order for our community to run, for our home to be taken care of, members of this community, people that are a part of this home must participate financially. There is no way around it. I'm sure you all do not need me to tell you that it takes a significant amount of money to run a building this size, a campus this size. It takes money to operate and manage the services that are provided here. I've been told that only about 1/3 of parishioners contribute routinely to the church and only about 1/2 contribute at least some money throughout the year. We can probably do better than that. This is on us- us, the members of this community, this church, this home. It is all of our responsibility to take care of this place. I hope, if you are not already, that you will consider being a part of what makes this place, this community, this home operate.

I appreciate your attention this evening /morning. Thank you for listening to my thoughts. I hope that you will reflect a little bit, on what this place, this community this home means to you. I hope you will reflect, a little bit, about what you can do to contribute, to help us take care of this place, our community, our home.