

TERRY:

Thank you Father. As Fr. Jim mentioned, my name is Terry Herrman and this is my lovely bride Elin. We are here this evening/morning to speak to you about our stewardship journey. It's fitting that today's Gospel reading from John is about Christ as the living Bread of Life. That Christ literally cherishes us enough to nourish us with His very Body and Blood and that this truth is central to our relationship with Christ. This opportunity to speak to you today about stewardship caused us to look back on our own stewardship journey and we realized that for a very long time we were missing this essential component... this relationship with Christ. We were like two legs of a three legged stool.

Don't get us wrong, we considered ourselves "good" Catholics, we were registered members of this parish, we attended Mass regularly, and we volunteered our time in various capacities. Shortly after moving to Ames, some 25 years ago, I had a desire to give back the gifts I had received. This desire came from growing up in a strong Catholic family and witnessing my father's active involvement in the church as a child. Like my father I became involved in the Knights of Columbus, the Parish Life Committee, the Pastoral Council, and as a Catechist for Religious Education. Looking back though, I see now that for a very long time, my head and hands were in it, my heart was not.

ELIN:

My path to stewardship has been a rather bumpy ride. I converted to Catholicism, mostly out of a feeling obligation in 1993 when our first child, Ian, was just an infant. However, I absolutely loved the RCIA process and the night I was baptized I remember feeling an overwhelming sense of peace and belonging. I felt I was HOME. Infused with the Holy Spirit, as I imagine many converts are, I jumped into service and became involved with the RCIA team. I wanted to share my love for the church. Soon, however, as our family expanded with the birth of our two daughters, Carrie & Anna, my service to the church became more sporadic. Terry and I helped initiate Children's Liturgy of the Word and we even became co-catechists for Freshmen teens. For me, however, it wasn't a very pleasant experience. While I was excited to share my new found faith, it was, I now realize, a faith of infatuation, not solid, and definitely not centered on Christ and his Word.

TERRY:

About six years ago, my wife and I were approached by Anna Steele, our Youth Ministry Coordinator, to be a part of the Life Teen Fall Retreat weekend. The weekend retreat was facilitated by a group of faith-filled stewards – ordinary people, who through the work of the Holy Spirit, were sharing with our teens the Gospel and more importantly the beauty and dignity of God’s plan for them.

ELIN:

I remember thinking that the last thing I wanted to do was to spend a weekend with a bunch of teenagers. But I did. Looking back, I now realize that it wasn’t me that acquiesced, rather, it was the Holy Spirit gently drawing me in. It was an experience that changed our lives. It was during that retreat I came to the profound realization that if I had been able to have experienced that same Truth and witness such testimonies as a youth, I would have made better decisions as a teen myself.

TERRY:

Months later and quite by accident, we came to realize that our time spent that weekend in Adoration with the teens had a profound effect on both of us. Witnessing the teens on their knees in praise and surrender to Christ, we became convinced that the Holy Spirit was truly at work in their hearts and in ours as well. We joined the LifeTeen team and have just recently focused our attention on offering programs for the parents of our teens; many of whom also expressed a desire to learn more about the church and grow in their faith.

ELIN:

Since that first weekend retreat and our subsequent involvement with LifeTeen, we’ve gradually been drawn into a more intimate union with Christ, desiring to be closer to Him-- especially in the Eucharist. We’ve come to realize that when we receive Christ in the Eucharist—what Fr. Mitch Paqwa beautifully refers to as “the infinite mystery that remains beyond the total grasp of our minds and hearts”, we are –all of us, transformed by His Grace. It is through the grace of the liturgy, and in unity with Christ present in the Eucharist that we are compelled ourselves to be “present” in the lives of those we encounter and be better stewards of all he has entrusted to us. We have a long way to go, and I’m sure many of you feel the same way. We pray that we all may come to know Christ’s deep and abiding Love, and that we may ALL grow more fully in generosity and service to one another, his mystical body, the Church.

Thank you