

Office of the Pastor  
Fr. Jim Tiegs



St. Stephen the Martyr  
*"A Call to the Cross"*

Dear St. Stephen Parishioner:

God chose the holy cross of Jesus as His primary symbol of Christian hope. The vertical portion connects us with God while the horizontal part links us to people. Although a sign of ultimate sacrifice, it was given to us out of love with the promise that what we give to others will be returned to us with increase.

Our theme for this year's stewardship process is "*A Call to the Cross.*" Gazing at our new church crucifix and making the sign of the cross help us reflect on our journey to discipleship at home, church and in the community. Enclosed is St. Stephen's 2006-2007 stewardship prayer. I sincerely urge you to pray it daily for the success of Stewardship at our wonderful parish. Logon to [www.stephen.org](http://www.stephen.org) for more information on stewardship at SSM.

The weekend financial offertory collection for the last fiscal year reveals the following statistics: 622 households of our total parish list contribute \$20.00 or more, 780 households give between \$5.00 and \$19.00, 636 households give less that \$5.00, and 932 households give \$0.00 to fund God's many and varied ministries at St. Stephen. It is clear that we could easily improve our situation if everyone would commit to giving in response to the blessings they have received from God by striving for an equality of sacrifice.

St. Stephen the Martyr is our spiritual home. The Church tells us in our catechesis that this, our spiritual home, is to be the very first priority in our charitable giving plans. She calls us to offer a planned portion of our income to our parish. The most important factor we must base our gift giving on, according to conscience and ability, is our relationship with God.

Enclosed in this mailing is a financial commitment form. Please pray on it, then bring your completed form in the envelope provided to Mass the weekend of October 14/15 when we celebrate our response to Sunday Stewardship. **Our website has an Online Pledge Form for Sunday Stewardship.** I respectfully request that each registered household of our worshipping community complete one financial commitment form. Thank you!

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Pastor

Jesus speaks a powerful truth as St. Mark writes, "*In the measure you give you shall receive, and more besides. To those who have, more will be given...*" It is my hope that as we become faithful stewards, St. Stephen's spiritual community will experience deeper joy, peace and trust in God as we grow in holiness.