



STEWARDSHIP REFLECTION

Clayton Heibert

I was born and raised Catholic here in Elizabethtown. I attended CCD at St. John in Rineyville until I was confirmed as a freshman in high school. After being confirmed I continued to attend mass every Sunday but really had no other involvement in my faith until 6 years later as a junior in college.

As a junior year at UK, a friend of mine invited me to go on a mission trip to Nicaragua on spring break. An organization called the Fellowship of Catholic University Students (FOCUS) was hosting this trip and was being led by 2 Catholic missionaries from UK and 2 from Texas A&M, and about 10 students from each of these universities were going on the trip. The UK Ag Economics department was taking a group of students to Argentina for two weeks, a trip they coordinated every year and many of my buddies were going. This is the trip I really wanted to take. Unfortunately, it was quite expensive and I wasn't able to afford it. So, I agreed to go to Nicaragua, mainly because this was the first opportunity I had to travel outside the US and it was only one week and a fraction of the cost.

While on this trip I experienced a different kind of friendship than I had ever experienced before. These other students were very devout in their Catholic faith, definitely much more than myself. I felt like they truly cared about me as a person and about helping me and each other grow closer to Christ. I was in a fraternity in college and the fraternity has blessed me with many friendships I still have to this day but also many of these friendships were based on just having fun together rather than an authentic care for each other. After returning from this trip, one of the UK missionaries who led the trip, invited me to join one of his bible studies and helped me to get involved with the campus Newman Center, where I was introduced to so many amazing people.

Upon graduation from the University of Kentucky in 2018, I returned to E-town after accepting a position with an agricultural supplier. I was informed by one of the missionaries at UK that a former FOCUS missionary from Florida had accepted the youth director position at St. James in Elizabethtown. Once Andrew arrived in E-town we were connected through our mutual friend and he asked me to help with the youth ministry at St. James. I really didn't feel like I knew much about the Catholic faith and especially not enough to help lead the youth. However, I accepted the offer knowing that he was needing some volunteers. This decision turned out to be a blessing, I have been able to meet many great people in this parish and have been inspired by the youth and their parents in their devotion to the Catholic faith.

I continue to volunteer with the youth, teaching a confirmation class as well as helping with the young adult ministry. I am very blessed to be a part of St. James, I have really enjoyed all the memories and friendships brought to me by this parish.