

## STEWARDSHIP REFLECTION

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My husband, Stuart, and I moved to Elizabethtown with our son, Jack, four years ago this May. When we were brand new in town, I remember coming to an 8 a.m. Mass on a Friday morning and being overwhelmed at the number of people in attendance. My first impression of St. James was, "What a holy, active parish!" (That impression has held true over the years.) I picked up a bulletin, and I was amazed to see all the activities in the parish, especially the amount of time for Adoration. There were countless opportunities to give my time, talent, and treasure; serve beside inspiring St. James parishioners; and grow closer to Jesus.

I signed up for the Seven Sisters Apostolate last year. Every day at St. James, there is a woman praying for an hour for our priests. I signed up thinking that I would be giving an hour of my time in prayer for our priest, but I ended up receiving much more than I gave. Through that hour, I learned how to pray for another person, to truly give my attention to the intercession of another. I watched other faithful women doing the same thing, even though they were much busier than I was, and I drew strength from their example.

I volunteered two years ago at Bible school as an aide in the 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> grade class. I watched the teacher handle middle school issues with patience and kindness. (My son was in 2<sup>nd</sup> grade at the time, so middle school issues were not something I had experienced yet!) She taught the kids in a way they could understand. We took the kids to Clarity for Women, and I watched the class pull weeds, clean, and joyfully give themselves in service. My faith and love for Jesus grew that week by watching others be His hands in the world.

I taught 4<sup>th</sup> grade at Family Faith Formation last year. At the end of every lesson, we gathered around our prayer table to say closing prayers. One night, a child in my class asked to say his prayer. He said the most simple, profound prayer for an end to abortion. His prayer moved me to tears. The simple, beautiful faith of this child inspired me to begin praying for the unborn and an end to abortion.

Everywhere I look at St. James, I am inspired to be a better Christian and grow closer to Christ. I have benefitted immeasurably from my opportunities to serve at our Parish. St. Francis said it best in his Prayer: "It is in giving that we receive." Stuart, Jack and I thank you for welcoming us into this community with open arms. We are grateful for the chance to contribute our time, talent, and treasure.