

# St. Maximilian Kolbe

## *A Vision for Ministry Leadership*



*Love God.  
Serve Others.  
Make Disciples.*



## Responding to the Call to Serve

Thank you for responding to the call to serve as a leader in our community! Thanks to grateful hearts like yours, our community is thriving! Forming disciples through stewardship is our mission and your role within this mission is paramount.

To better equip you for this journey in leadership, we have created this handout to give you some

perspective on what it takes to serve God's people through our parish ministries. Outlined on the following pages are several key attributes we feel are necessary for any leader to succeed in his or her mission. Also included are several steps that will lead to success when incorporated into the mission of any ministry. I encourage you to familiarize yourself with these concepts, as well as the concepts

inherent to stewardship.

Parish ministry is about so much more than accomplishing whatever "work" we have set out to do – it is ultimately about discipleship and stewardship. As a leader, you play such an important part in transforming our entire parish into a community of disciples committed to the stewardship way of life.

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# Answering the Call

## The Make-up of a True Leader

Before any leader-in-training can serve effectively, he or she must first look inward, at himself or herself, and build a foundation for service. Some leaders are born, but most are made – it takes humility, passion, courage and lots of patience. For service in our parish, it also takes a willingness to continuously seek guidance from the Holy Spirit. The traits or characteristics listed on this page represent the make-up of a quality parish leader.



### Servant-Leadership

Jesus is the model for servant-leadership. The following Gospel passage says it all: “The Son of Man did not come to be served but to serve and to give his life as a ransom for many” (Mt 20:28). All parish leaders should follow Christ’s example of servant-leadership. They find their inspiration in the fact that a job well done leads others to Christ – He gets the glory in all circumstances.



### Walk the Talk

It is one thing to say we believe in the mission of Christ; it is another thing entirely to say we live out God’s Word in our daily lives. The best leaders are those who not only encourage their fellow ministry participants to go to Mass, pray daily, learn about the faith and do good works – but actually do all of those things themselves. It is not enough to be Catholic in name; we must be Catholic in thought, word and action.



### Feed the Soul

A plant deprived of sunlight will surely die. So too will our souls if we are cut off from spiritual nourishment. Strong leaders have a hearty spiritual appetite and continuously look for ways to grow in faith. Formation, though, goes well beyond participation at Mass and the annual Stewardship Renewal. Time spent reflecting on Scripture is also a wonderful way to receive spiritual nourishment. There are countless other resources – spiritual books, CDs and DVDs – available as well.



### Attitude of Gratitude

The phrase, “Thanks a lot,” carries a wildly different meaning depending upon the attitude of the person who’s speaking. When said with a grateful attitude, it means just that – thank you. When said with an ungrateful attitude, the same phrase can actually mean the opposite! Strong leaders possess an attitude of gratitude – a profound sense of thanksgiving for all of the gifts God has given them. This quality is representative of a true steward. Remember, your attitude and your actions speaks much louder than your words!

## A Leader will...

- ◆ Attend Mass every Sunday and on Holy Days.
- ◆ Participate in the annual Stewardship Renewal – a yearly opportunity to reflect upon God’s presence in our lives, and seek to take the next step deeper in faith through commitments to time, talent and treasure.
- ◆ Promptly reach out to parishioners that have expressed interest in their ministry through the annual Stewardship Renewal.
- ◆ Be focused on providing ministry participants the tools and support needed to achieve success.
- ◆ Set expectations for those in the ministry.
- ◆ Be open to new ideas and willing to grow the ministry.
- ◆ Communicate effectively with parish leadership councils.
- ◆ Encourage and train others to seek leadership roles in their ministry to ultimately be a replacement.
- ◆ Be humble. Stay positive. Practice excellent hospitality. Work to lead people to Christ.
- ◆ Share their faith intentionally with friends, family and other parishioners.

# Ingredients for a Successful Ministry

While personal development and growth are most certainly important, it is also necessary for leaders to look outward and focus on the needs of others. This involves the work of our specific ministries – such as greeting before Mass, serving the hungry at a soup kitchen, or teaching Religious Education classes, for example.

But it also means serving the most basic need of all – bringing people to a closer relationship with Christ.

Beyond the many details that shape the day-to-day activities of our ministries, it all boils down to helping others encounter Christ in meaningful ways. In fact, everything else pales in comparison to this most basic need. The concepts listed on this page represent the components of any quality parish ministry.



## *“Build Bridges, Not Walls”*

This quote from Pope Francis outlines the central mission of any parish ministry. Regardless of the work we set out to accomplish, the ultimate measure of success should be determined by how welcoming and hospitable we are.

The most successful ministries are not the ones that raise the most money or complete the most work – but those that open the door for all who seek God’s presence and which help them connect with Christ in meaningful ways.



## *Neighbors, Not Strangers*

Unfortunately, all too often in our community, parishioners and guests attend Mass week after week without a clue of who’s sitting in front, beside or behind them. A sense of community is not always easily found. Ministry should reverse this trend by creating community. Activities should help members get to know their fellow ministers

on a personal level – about their families, their hobbies, their needs and their dreams. When work is accomplished within a team of friends and family, the result is much more powerful than if a sense of community is absent from the equation.



## *Accountability, Not Unpredictability*

It is critical that ministries be well-organized, communicate clearly and are conducted in a professional manner. All ministries should be accountable and strive for excellence. Leaders should provide a clear vision for participants; meetings should be well prepared and planned well. Ministry participants are more likely to rise to the challenge if the bar is set high.



## *Plan for the Future*

No one wants to be on the hook to lead a ministry for eternity. Eventually, no matter how wonderful the ministry, there comes a time when a leader needs to let go and step aside. Ministries should have a plan to reduce the friction caused by this inevitable occurrence through shared leadership responsibilities. Shared leadership

is also beneficial in that it provides opportunities for others to develop leadership skills, which can prime talented individuals for future leadership roles elsewhere in the parish.

## *Continued Formation*

The following resources provide insight into different leadership styles and strategies as well as guidance for stimulating discipleship with your parish.

*Stewardship: A Disciple’s Response*  
*A Pastoral Letter on Stewardship*  
United States Conference of  
Catholic Bishops

*Grateful and Giving*  
Deacon Don McArdle

*Divine Renovation*  
Fr. James Mallon

*Our Hearts Were Burning Within Us*  
United States Conference of  
Catholic Bishops

*The Joy of the Gospel*  
Pope Francis

*Go and Make Disciples*  
United States Conference of  
Catholic Bishops

*Four Signs of a Dynamic Catholic*  
Matthew Kelly

*Rebuilt*  
Fr. Michael White  
and Tom Corcoran