

St. Anne “Faith in our Future” Co-Leader Witness Talk May 2008

Judy Hutchins

My name is Judy Hutchins and this is my husband, Gary. We've been married 28 years and have three children, who currently attend college. We have been members of St. Anne for two years. Previous to that, we were members of St. Mary, here in Kenosha. The decision to switch to St. Anne was not easy for us. St. Mary had been our “home” for ten years. At St. Mary I was very involved in the Christian Formation program and both Gary and I were Eucharistic Ministers. We felt comfortable there. Occasionally we visited St. Anne for Mass and yes, we felt a difference. While St. Mary was comfortable, St. Anne was invigorating.

We determined that we needed that spark of energy to further increase our faith lives. When we made the transition to St. Anne, we promised each other to move slowly and not commit to too many ministries. Well, we didn't keep that promise. In two years, we've gotten involved in hospitality, the bread-baking ministry, Eucharistic ministry, adult faith formation, and Gary is leader of the finance ministry. As many of you know, it is hard to say “no” to Fr. Don and fellow parish members. Now we find ourselves standing before you today as co-leaders, with Mark and LeAnn Rogan, for the archdiocesan stewardship campaign.

Before Gary speaks to you, I need to warn you..... he's a banker. He actually likes to talk about money, things like variable rate versus fixed rate mortgages and amortization tables. But don't worry. His talk today is simple, yet I feel it is very important. If we are to be knowledgeable participants in this campaign, we first need to understand our financial situation.

Gary Hutchins

As coordinator of the Finance ministry, I will be talking about the financial reasons to support this campaign. For the spiritual reasons, you will need to listen to God.

I feel the “Faith in our Future” stewardship campaign couldn't have come at a better time for this parish. It is as much about the future of St. Anne as it is about the future of the Archdiocese of Milwaukee. As you read through your campaign information you will see that the Archdiocese's campaign goals are to raise funds to support Catholic Education and life long faith formation in southeast Wisconsin as well as the global church through its mission work.

Those goals sound very similar to St Anne's mission statement, which in part states we will “dedicate ourselves to: Servant leadership, Christian discipleship and lifelong growth in faith”. To me, the “Faith in our Future” capital campaign is just an extension of the partnership that St. Anne has had with the Archdiocese of Milwaukee both spiritually and financially for almost ten years.

To start this parish, the Archdiocese gave us a \$400,000 gift and a \$400,000 loan to purchase the land. They also gave us a \$350,000 loan for furnishings and start-up expenses. Our agreement with the archdiocese was that whenever we sold the parish center the line of credit was to be paid in full from the proceeds. However, what the Archdiocese did for us when the parish center was sold was allow us to keep all but \$25,000 from the sale so we could set up a reserve account. In addition, they combined both our loans into one \$725,000 interest free loan requiring only a payment of \$3,000 each quarter. The Archdiocese has been very good to St.

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Anne and I feel this campaign gives us a means to repay that generosity while improving our own financial situation at the same time.

St. Anne has a campaign goal of \$500,000 and 60%, or \$300,000, of what we raise will come back to our parish. As you know, we are a parish that is committed to stewardship and we recognize that all that we have is a gift from God. Therefore, our parish case statement states we will first make a gift of 10% of our campaign funds to the Shalom Center to be used towards building a new homeless shelter. After that another 10% will be used for technology upgrades, equipment replacement, and some facilities work here at church.

The main portion of funds coming back to St. Anne will be set aside to replenish our mortgage reserves. The Archdiocese campaign gives us the opportunity to do that without having to bear the costs of conducting a capital campaign on our own. All campaign expenses including the consultants, the printing, and the mailings are paid for by the Archdiocese. If we exceed our goal by 125% the additional funds raised will be shared 80/20 with the parish and if we double our goal all excess funds will come directly to us.

Over 50% of our revenues so far this year have been consumed by debt repayment. In addition we are already depleting the almost \$200,000 we set aside in reserve from the sale of the parish center back in January of 2007. We simply have too much debt for a parish our size. In fact, based on customary lending guidelines our mortgage balance of \$5.5 million is almost twice the size a parish of 775 households would be expected to support.

Increasing our mortgage reserve will allow us to cover any monthly cash flow deficits as we continue to grow our membership. As you know from our case statement, if we meet our campaign goal of \$500,000, we will be able to set aside \$240,000 in reserve. With a comfortable amount of money set aside in reserve our parish leadership and Father Don will not have to commit so much time worrying about the administrative side of St. Anne but instead have the freedom to allocate more of their time and energies towards the spiritual side, which is why we all came to St Anne in the first place.

I truly believe that God provides for his people and the timing of this Archdiocesan campaign is just another example of God looking out for us. We are a parish in need of increased financial support and this campaign provides us with all the tools necessary to increase our stewardship giving with minimal direct expenses. If we can secure our financial future, we will be able to focus on our spiritual growth and the expansion of our ministries.

Judy and I have received many gifts from God and we feel compelled to share those gifts with others. I can't think of a better way to do that than sharing our gifts with St. Anne while at the same time repaying the debt of gratitude I feel towards the Archdiocese for all they have done for St. Anne. As campaign co-leaders, Judy and I are asking that you give prayerful consideration to a generous three year commitment to this campaign, over and above what you are presently giving to St. Anne.

Next weekend our campaign co-leaders, Mark and LeAnn Rogan will be speaking at all the masses on why they feel this campaign is important. Then the following weekend, May 31st and June 1st, is commitment weekend where you will fill out your commitment cards at mass. Judy and I will be available after mass today if you have any questions about the campaign. Thank you so much for your attention.