

# *For a plentiful harvest* Spring preparedness is needed

By Dan Charney, stewardship missionary, Diocese of Bethlehem



*[April 4, 2006] This afternoon I started to prepare the soil for my little vegetable garden. Soon I'll be planting seeds and seedlings. As the weeks pass, I will be weeding, cultivating, and watering. All this work starts in spring, and continues through summer. With the blessing of good weather, it will produce an abundance of delicious, mouth-watering fruit and vegetables come late summer and fall.*

The same early effort put forth by a parish to prepare for its annual financial stewardship campaign can also produce a rich harvest.

Parishes in this diocese that have Year-Round Stewardship programs, have an **average pledge of 58 %** more than those who do not have such a program; and their **average annual giving is 69 %** higher. Who among you wouldn't like to have those or comparable figures?

**Now** is the time to start planning for the fall campaign. The diocesan Stewardship Commission recommends the *New Consecration Sunday* program by Herb Miller.

A group of our parishes has used this program and reported very good results. *Those who completed our survey experienced a 20% average increase in giving. Some 49 % of those completing an Estimate of Giving Card increased their giving.*

The main focus of the New Consecration Sunday program is **the need of the giver to give, rather than the need of the parish to receive.**

By putting our trust in God, and knowing God will meet our needs with the remainder gives us the freedom to become masters of our money

**To help facilitate your planning for the *New Consecration Sunday* program: Come to a meeting at Grace, Kingston, or St. Margaret's, Emmaus, both on June 28 at 7 p.m.**

rather than the reverse. As our generosity increases, our love for Jesus Christ increases, our relationship with God through Jesus deepens, and our lives are enriched and more fulfilling because of it.

As members of Christ's body, we are called to love, serve, and help others. This is our mission; faithfulness to the mission requires giving our energy, resources, money, time, and talent.

Begin your Spring planning for the Fall harvest:

***Pick your dates for New Consecration Sunday and Leadership Meal.***

***Invite your speaker (leader). See our diocesan website for a list of potential speakers.***

***Ask three parishioners to give a two-minute testimony about why they give without fear of loss.***

***Begin talking, writing, and teaching about the tithe.***

***Determine what the mission will be for your parish next year.***

***Determine what is needed, dollar wise, to support that mission.***

***Determine how you will communicate the mission, and what will be required to all parishioners.***

Your diocesan Stewardship Commission will be available to answer questions about the *New Consecration Sunday* program, and will give you some helpful tips on how to run the program for a successful harvest.

We are studying and preparing alternative ways this program can be used in small parishes.

We have scheduled two meetings to help facilitate your planning: at Grace, Kingston, and St. Margaret's, Emmaus; both on June 28 at 7 p.m..

Make your reservation to attend by contacting Dan Charney soon, 610-837-4613, dancharney@aol.com.

Because of your preparedness, may you be blessed with a plentiful harvest!