

Dear St. Margaret Mary Parish Family,

I am writing to you today about one of the simplest, yet most profound truths of our faith. God loves us.

A wise older priest, friend, and mentor of mine would often say from the pulpit or in daily conversation with great confidence, "God loves you absolutely unconditionally just as you are." He had come to know the boundless and everlasting love of God in his own life and found any and every opportunity to share that knowledge with others. If we reflect on God's love, we know that we feel it in many ways, some spiritual and others tangible. When Christ speaks of the unconditional love of God, the Father, his directive is simply, "love one another, as I have loved you." This is the essence of stewardship: feeling God's love, reflecting it back to Him and sharing it with others.

We know from the earliest accounts of Christian community life, the reality was each person carried their share of the load in support of one another, using their gifts and resources for the good of all. Recognizing that the many blessings we have in this life are gifts from God and our sharing of them with others not only helps to advance the Gospel's message but brings Christ's light into their lives. Through such experiences our community is continually renewed, and your generosity flows outward in the parish's mission of mercy.

Giving and working together, living as faithful stewards, "love" takes tangible form. Through love in action, the broken are made whole, the sick and suffering find hope, the stranger is welcomed and those in need are served as people of all ages encounter Jesus. Through His love, we worship together and become One Body in Christ. All the ministries and services that are at the heart of our parish are possible because of your generosity and consistent support.

Over the next few weeks, as a community, we will be preparing for the Stewardship Renewal Weekend which will take place on October 14-15. I have asked our Stewardship and Development Director, Communications Director, and Pastoral Team to provide information that will help us appreciate the influence and scope that prayer, participation, and generosity have on community life and our ability to reach out and share the Gospel message. As we get started in preparation for Stewardship Renewal Weekend, I ask you to prayerfully consider your own gifts and how God may be asking you to be renewed in your participation in support of SMM Parish for the coming year. Your gifts make our service and ministry possible.

Thank you for your commitment to our mission to be a Catholic Community rooted in the Sacred Heart of Jesus, ignited through the Word, sacrament, and service. It may assist your discernment process to link to our web pages at [smmomaha.org](http://smmomaha.org) to get-involved and see where your gifts can lend themselves to our mission.

Let us pray together for the grace we all need in order to share in proportion to our ability - to truly be channels of God's love.

In the Peace of Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Fr. Ralph O'Donnell". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first letters of the first and last names being capitalized and prominent.

Fr. Ralph O'Donnell  
Pastor  
Saint Margaret Mary Parish