

# Giving from the Heart

---

If you have spent time with Rick Mardesich, you already know that he is open, friendly, energetic, and loves spending time around the parish. You might also know that he is the proud father of four children, ages 25, 23, 21, and 19. What you may not be aware of is just how much he has been involved in parish life over the 25 years that he has been a member of St. Mary's Church.

Rick grew up as a member of St. Joseph of Cupertino Parish and attended public school. His parents were "great - strong and loving." When his Uncle Joe and Aunt Carol brought him to a midnight Christmas Mass at St. Mary's one year, he fell in love with the way the church felt, and that feeling has remained with him ever since.

Once he began attending St. Mary's, the first activity in which Rick became involved was the Country Fair, and he went on to help oversee logistical operations for that event for about ten years. During that time, Teri Tucci invited him to join the Building and Grounds Committee.

Because of his expertise in heating and air-conditioning design and installation, his most significant contributions to the parish has been the overseeing of two major projects: installation of the church's heating and AC system, and replacing the church roof. As for future undertakings, he has his sights set on making improvements to the school classrooms.

Rick also brings his business-owner experience to other important endeavors, such as being a consultant to the finance committee, and helping to formulate budgets for capital improvements. While acknowledging his "black and white" approach to finding solutions to problems, he recognizes the value of the committee as a forum where all ideas can be expressed and discussed until a consensus is reached. Working with fellow parishioners for the good of the church has helped to strengthen his communication skills, and his abilities to apologize when he has made a mistake and to not hold a grudge have proven valuable.

When asked what motivates him to volunteer so much of his time to the parish, Rick responds, "It feels good here!" He likes being around the parish, and it feels good to be called upon and be able to draw on his knowledge and expertise. He admits, though, that when it comes right down to it, there is just some unidentifiable quality about St. Mary's that attracts him.

Through his volunteer work, Rick feels a sense of community, of making a difference, of involvement, and he likes the feeling of being a part of our parish's history. He's been here long enough now to know what happened in previous building projects that need to be redone, which makes him a source of valuable advice.

Rick is an enthusiastic proponent of volunteering - he wants to assure fellow parishioners that whatever skills, aptitudes or amount of time that someone has, be it managerial, clerical, building, artistic, finance, teaching, leadership, or an hour here or there, it will fill a need in our parish. Rick notes that once he got involved in activities and projects at St. Mary's, he was naturally and gradually drawn in to giving more in multiple areas, and he likes that just fine.

