



*Parish Ministry*

# Susan Bega Brings A Servants Heart To Stephen's Ministry

Although Susan Bega has only been a registered member of the parish for a little over two months now, you've probably seen her around the parish quite a bit since she first started attending Mass here a year and a half ago. One thing is for sure, Susan certainly has not wasted time getting involved in parish life! Most recently, in addition to serving as an Extraordinary Minister of the Eucharist, she has been a founding member of the Stephen's Ministry, a brand new ministry here at St. Francis whose trained members offer Christian compassion, guidance, and a listening ear to those who are facing various challenges in their lives.

"About a year ago, shortly after I joined St. Francis parish, I realized that I wanted to do something more," Susan recalls. "I needed to find out how I could do my part to build the life of the parish – to find out how best to use the gifts God has given me." Originally from Millbrae, CA, Susan graduated from San Jose State and now works for the State of California as a Vocational Rehab Counselor, which has given her a heart for comforting and encouraging those in distress. When Susan decided she wanted to take an active,

spiritual role in the Church, she found the perfect fit in the Stephen's Ministry. "I needed to have a spiritual role in addition to going to church on Sundays. That just wasn't enough. Fr. John was a real inspiration to me,

helping me want to do more." Needless to say, Susan immediately jumped on board when she heard the possibility of starting the Stephen's Ministry at St. Francis.

And so, this past April, Fr. John, Susan, Joyce Harper, and Elaine Swyt attended the 50 hour, week-long training to be Stephen Ministers in St.

Louis, MO, where the ministry was started in 1975.

This ministry is named after St. Stephen, one of the first deacons in the early Church, who was commissioned by the apostles to care for the needs of people in the Christian community. There are currently over 6,000 congregations encompassing 80 different denominations that are enrolled worldwide. Fr. John realized that many of our own parishioners like Susan were looking for a meaningful



ministry to be involved in. By the same token, many parishioners were looking for a place to find wise counsel. He felt that the Stephen Ministry provided an unique way to utilize the gifts of our parishioners by allowing them to serve one another in love.

"Right now, we are at the stage of spreading awareness of this ministry throughout the parish," says Susan, who is excited to begin using her training and experience to benefit her brothers and sisters in Christ. She admits that it is a great blessing for her to serve as an Extraordinary Minister to the homebound. "I've been rewarded time and time again through bringing the Eucharist to my ladies and seeing the joy on their faces. The Stephen Ministry will be a wonderful part of that – bringing Jesus to others. I'm excited for others to have that same experience."

Susan encourages anyone interested in becoming a Stephen Minister to contact the parish office. Recruiting and gift assessment for the ministry will take place later on this summer, followed by training in November. Please consider following Susan's example and the example of St. Stephen, bringing the healing arm of Jesus to your fellow parishioners!



**STEPHEN MINISTRY**  
*Christ Caring for People through People*