

The Pilot

Winchester parish hosts author for stewardship talk



SPECIAL TO THE PILOT

On Feb. 1, St. Mary Parish in Winchester hosted best selling author, Paul Wilkes, for a day of interactive discussions on how to rekindle the spirit of involvement among parishioners as captured in his new book *Excellent Catholic Parishes: The Guide to Best Places and Practices*. Author of 16 books, Wilkes is a recognized authority on discerning the strengths and weaknesses of parishes and finding new ways towards true discipleship. During his talk, Wilkes highlighted the importance of encouraging lay leadership as a source of fresh ideas and new skills. **The event**

(Left to right) Craig Gibson, author Paul Wilkes, Ken Chisholm, and Father Richard Messina speak during Wilkes' Feb. 1 visit to the parish. *Courtesy photo*

was sponsored by Parish Growth Partners, an organization also based in Winchester and founded to help parishes implement best-practices for realizing the time, talent and treasure of their valued parishioners and reaching the full potential as a parish community.

St. Mary is one of 141 parishes in the Boston Archdiocese that has initiated a stewardship program. The goal of the program is to connect with each parishioner and invite him or her to participate in their parishes and reinforce their faith. The success of St. Mary's stewardship program is exemplary. Over the past year, the parish has seen a strong increase in parishioner involvement across all its ministries and committees, as well as recorded an 18 percent increase in the end of year Grand Annual appeal as compared to last year. This is an all time high in the history of St. Mary's.