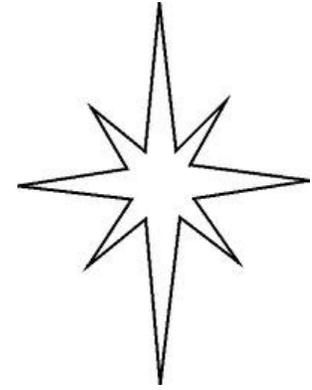


Stewardship in Action at St. Bernard



A BIRTHDAY GIFT FOR THE BABY JESUS

We were busy rushing through the mall spending lots of money on presents for each other. We had just finished taking our young daughter to visit Santa in the center court. We were walking past the nativity scene when she stopped to admire the Baby Jesus lying in the manger. She then looked up at me with those innocent eyes and asked, "What are we getting Baby Jesus for his birthday?"

What an important question for each of us to ask ourselves, "What will we give to Jesus?" Of course spiritually we will give Him our time, our talents, our very lives. We give Him our hearts, our love, our souls. But my little daughter

would not have understood those concepts yet. She was being very practical. She saw the trunk of the car filled with purchases. She knew from experience that on Christmas morning, a mountain of presents would magically appear under the Christmas tree and she just wanted to be sure Jesus didn't get left out. After all, it was His Birthday! Here is a gift suggestion that Jesus would enjoy as a birthday present.

Personally, I don't think there is anything wrong with a Christian Steward buying lots of gifts for friends and family, lavishly celebrating the joys

and blessings of the season, as long as you have the resources to afford the gifts and purchases without going into debt. But as you make those purchases, add up all the money you are spending this year on presents for under the tree, parties to celebrate, and the new clothes and dresses that seem so necessary to attend the festivities in style.

Then take a tithe of that total amount—at least 10%—and donate the tithe to a special project or ministry in the parish as Jesus' special birthday present this year. You will find that your celebrations will be all the merrier when you remember to also bring an appropriate "present" for the Honored Guest of the party — the One whose birthday we are celebrating.

Happy Birthday Jesus.

CHRISTMAS HOPE



Christmas is the season of hope because the Bible is a book of hope. The Bible tells the heroic and thrilling story of a hope foretold in the Old Testament and fulfilled in the New Testament. Like an arch of promise it spanned the ages. Men

of God saw a daystar in the bosom of midnight and followed it. The last book of the Old Testament closed with a faint hope that was followed by four hundred years of tragic history. Yet, incredibly, that mighty hope survived. The

hymn-writer caught the spirit of it when he wrote of the birth of Jesus — "The hopes and fears of all the years are met in Thee tonight." The world is not without hope, we just need to know where to find it.



STEWARDSHIP TREE

Our parish ministries often have a need for some short-term assistance on specific projects, but find it difficult to find people to help. The **Stewardship Tree** gives people an opportunity to assist one or more of our parish ministries with a single activity. It is a way to take a “test drive” with a ministry. If you wondered what a particular ministry is like, but did not feel you could commit for a significant length of time, the **Stewardship Tree** lets you dip your toe into the water of community service.

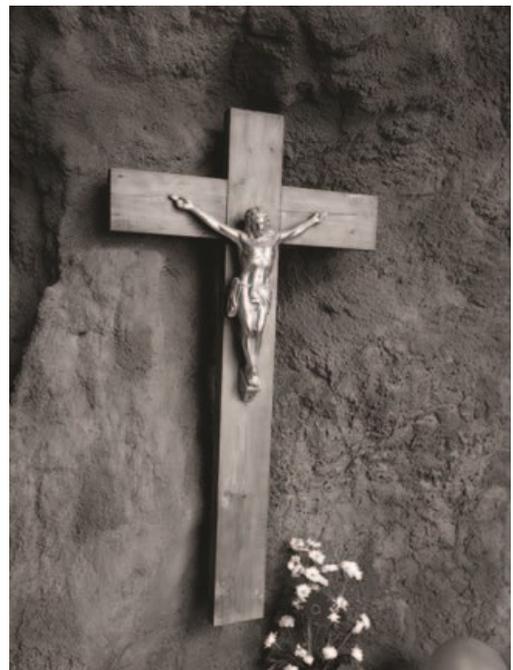
The *Stewardship Council* is pleased to announce the return of the **Stewardship Tree** in the Narthex during the Advent season. Its leaves will contain a variety of brief, specific service opportunities. Please take this opportunity to reach out and grow in your faith, meet new people and get involved!



A NEW YEARS PRAYER

Lord, I stand on the threshold of a New Year.

Make me big enough to honestly admit my mistakes, smart enough to accept flattery without it making me arrogant, tall enough to tower above deceit, strong enough to live by love, brave enough to welcome criticism, generous enough to share my resources with joy, compassionate enough to understand others who fail, humble enough to be thoughtful of my neighbor, and above all, willing to be led in the way of Your Will for me. Amen.



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Interested in learning more about the Stewardship Council?

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