

# Stewardship in Action at St. Bernard



## TURNING SERVICE INTO SERVICE



As Catholic Christians, we all strive toward a lifetime of service. This goal has been realized by many in our parish who have honorably served in the military, and who continue to serve now that their military careers have come to an end. With parishioners from all branches of the United States military, the community of St. Bernard is strengthened by the faith and service of its veterans, who have been an integral part of our parish ministries throughout the years.



Thus, as the nation celebrates the 42<sup>nd</sup> anniversary of the Memorial Day holiday, *Stewardship in Action* has chosen to celebrate the good stewardship of some of St. Bernard's veterans who courageously fought and risked their lives to defend and serve our country and our fellow Americans.

Representing the Air Force is John Casey, who served as an officer in the Air Mobility Command. John is a Vietnam-

era veteran and a member of the Air Force Reserve, who was active during the first Gulf War, Operation Desert Storm. John believes that his faith guided his decisions during his service, noting that "the morals of the Christian faith, the Oath I took on being commissioned as an Officer and the Core Values of the US Air Force reinforce each other." John maintains that he is inspired to "do his best at all times" by the Air Force Core Values of *Integrity first, Service before self, and Excellence in all we do.*

It is evident that since retiring from the Air Force in 2001, John has brought these values to a life of service at St. Bernard. Over the years, John has volunteered with Men's Club Breakfast, Pastoral Council, Beloved, the Interfaith Hospitality Network, New Moms New Expectations, Pre-Cana and the Appalachian Mission Project. He also recently became a Eucharistic Minister and visit residents in a local nursing homes and helps to minister to their spiritual needs.

From the Navy hails parishioner Ron Krilla, who was a Vietnam-era Naval Aviator for five years of active duty followed by 20 more years in the Naval Reserve, serving the US military for 25 years. When asked if his Christian faith was ever challenged while he was in the war zone, Ron says his faith "wasn't challenged and my conscience was clear that my loyalty was to my country, which allowed its citizens to practice the faith of their choice." Ron believes that as US citizens we have a duty to defend both our country and its principles from those who would cause us harm. Ron believes that as a Christian, our duty to our country is much as an individual responsibility as our duty to our Faith.

While Ron's service in the military has come to an end, his service to his faith community has not, and Ron has served the parish in various capacities for over 25 years. He has served as a charter member of the Stewardship Council, a Eucharistic Minister, a lector, the leader of the Men's Club, a SHIP and IHN ministry volunteer, a Lay Director of the Men's Cornerstone Retreat, a Crew Chief for the Appalachian Work Ministry and a CCD storyteller for the Sand Dollar Lenten Project.



**U.S. AIR FORCE**



**MARINES**  
**THE FEW. THE PROUD.**



From the U.S. Army comes Veteran Ed Harris, who was a guard at Nuremberg following World War II for the trials of many of the German high command, and who served two years under the command of General Patton's 3<sup>rd</sup> Army, 88<sup>th</sup> Infantry. Although Ed witnessed many tragic events during his service, he said his faith was never challenged while fighting for his country, and credits prayer with sustaining him through difficult times.

At St. Bernard, Ed serves as an acolyte for funeral masses, a Eucharistic Minister, an usher, and he also counts the church collection. He has served IHN (Inter-faith Hospitality Network) for many years and has been involved with the Bishop's Annual Appeal.

Finally, from the United States Marine Corps is William J. (Bill) Vierbuchen, Jr who served in the Korean War from 1950 to 1954. Bill reports that even in difficult times, God never left him during the War, and he drew strength from God to help him through each day. He credits a chaplain who held mass in his barracks with helping to sustain his faith, which translated into service

upon his return, first as a reader at the old St. Bernard Church in Raritan, and in more recent years in various roles at St. Bernard in Bridgewater. These include serving as an acolyte, a reader, and as a delivery person for the food bank.

These representatives from the Army, the Navy, the Air Force, and the Marines represent only a few of the many St. Bernard parishioners who have served in the line of duty and who, through their service, continue to strengthen our parish community today. The community of St. Bernard honors all those who served, and prays that God continues to shower them with His graces and bountiful

blessings. Without their courage, strength and steadfastness, we could not enjoy the freedoms we have today.



## STEWARDSHIP TREE CONTINUES TO BLOSSOM!

*Parishioners,*

*On behalf of the Stewardship Council, we would like to sincerely thank everyone who took advantage of service opportunity (leaves) offered by many of our fine ministries. The Lenten season resulted in more than 60 leaves taken, a fantastic display of true Stewardship in action!*

*Look for the tree again this coming Advent season.*

*Your Stewardship Council*



***Interested in learning more about the Stewardship Council?***

Please contact Mark Dransfield (mlrek@optonline.net or call 908-526-6649)