

Brother Steward

Lay Reader Message

Do You Have a Room?

“And she gave birth to her firstborn, a Son. She wrapped him in cloths and placed him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn.” Luke 2:7

As these familiar words are read every Christmas, we repeat them in our minds. Having heard them so often, we know them by heart. And every year, pastors try to come up with novel thoughts about an age-old story. Sadly, as much as we love to hear the story, we too often put it out of our thoughts as soon as we put up the calendar for the New Year. Like the infamous innkeeper, we cannot find room for the newborn Baby.

We are creatures of habit, and it seems that it’s quite difficult to change old habits, most of them not very beneficial. If we keep our focus on that simple message, though, we might be able to create new habits. Instead of hurriedly scanning our devotions for the day, we might make it a habit to remind ourselves that it is God speaking to us through his Word.

Instead of uttering a quick, “Morning. How are you?” we might actually take a few minutes to wait for the answer and offer encouragement and maybe even pray with a colleague, a friend, a family member. Instead of setting our own schedules, we might ask God to teach us to number our days so that we can go ahead in his wisdom (Psalm 90:12). What other good habits could we establish if we focused on *“our Lord Jesus Christ, [who] though he was rich, yet for [our] sake[s] became poor, so that [we] through his poverty might become rich”* (2 Corinthians 8:9)?

Do you have room? By his grace, God will warm our cold hearts and give us the desire to be his stewards with room in our day to serve him, room in our finances to give what is needed, and room in our lives for him to work his will in and through us.

Brother Steward

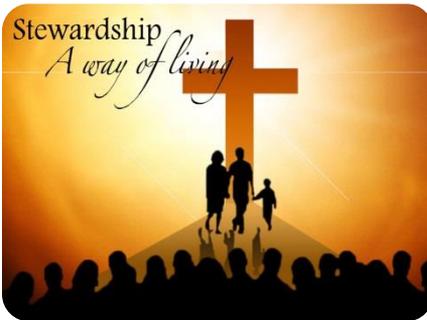
Selfless Acts of Human Kindness!

It has happened all over:

- *A policeman buys boots and socks for a freezing homeless man who is shoeless;*
- *Hurricane neighbors help each other bail out water and save pieces of their lives;*
- *Thousands of Thanksgiving meals were made and distributed to the poor and hungry by volunteers both young and old;*
- *Houses with leaky plumbing or broken air conditioners were fixed for financially strapped families;*
- *Medical bills and water bills were paid and our food pantry kept many families fed;*
- *Visits were made to the sick and lonely;*
- *Toys and togs were gathered for kids who go without.*



Stewardship is at the heart of human kindness and Divine Love. Use God's gifts to us of Time, Talent and Treasure to



fulfill his mission. This holy season remember, "Whatever you do for the least of your Brothers, you do for me."

God Bless!

Brother Steward

Christmas Compassion

Sometime ago in the 6th century, one of our Abbots spied a monk weeping in the corner of the monastery. "Why are you crying?" the Abbot said. "I have so much compassion at Christmas for the local needy, hungry, and distressed. I can't stop crying." Abbot replied, "Well, do something about it, 'Ora et Labora'" That meant pray and work.

And it worked. The monk, after praying fiercely with harvest in hand, devised a recipe and brewed beer. Then wine. Cheese and bread followed, which he shared with the locals and his Brother Monks. They even carved toys for girls and boys at Christmas. Cries of joy resounded through the countryside.

The moral is: Don't hide your compassion under a bushel basket. Share it with others. Take your time, and talents and treasures and spread them around like fine wine, good cheese, and fresh bread for all to enjoy this Christmas season. Alive in the Spirit of Giving, these are your gifts to the Child Jesus.

God Bless!



Brother Steward

Waiting for Jesus!

Even centuries ago, we Brothers looked forward to Advent with great anticipation and joy. As it is today, we prepared for the birth of Jesus. We rehearsed the hymns for Gaudete Sunday. We made our breads, and spirits with added joy. And carved wooden toys for children and brought food to the needy. And we waited for the splendor and spiritual meaning of Christmas.



Today at church we prepare and wait in the same way. However, some of our less fortunate are waiting also; but for other things: waiting for a call to go to work, waiting for relief from utility bills and rent payments, waiting for a call from a far-away loved one, waiting in quiet desperation.

We can heal the wait by helping our ministries with our time, talent and treasure. Then we can all participate in the Joy of Christmas.

God Bless!

