

## **Brother Steward**

### *Lay Reader Message*

#### **Give Credit Where Credit Is Due**

A steward is one who manages the resources and affairs for someone else. On behalf of the owner, a steward is given the latitude to make far-reaching decisions. As God's stewards, we recognize that we are managers, not owners, of all that God has entrusted to us.

Perhaps the best example of stewardship the Bible gives us is in the life of Joseph. We know about his youth . . . that he was the favored son of his father, but hated and resented by his brothers whose bitterness led them to sell him into slavery. Throughout the account of Joseph's life in the book of Genesis, the words, "*God was with Joseph*" are repeated.

Joseph recognized God's control over his life. When Potiphar's wife tried to seduce him, he rejected her, saying, "*How then could I do such a wicked thing and sin against God?*" (Genesis 39:9) And he fled from evil, trusting in God to protect him. Although the result of this encounter was that Joseph landed in prison, he still relied on his God. When the cupbearer finally remembered Joseph's ability to interpret dreams, and Pharaoh called for Joseph, it was his chance to build himself up and get back into good standing. Instead, Joseph answered, "*I cannot [interpret your dreams], but God will give Pharaoh the answer he desires*" (Genesis 41:16).

As second only to Pharaoh and with the wisdom God had given, Joseph saved not only Egypt from starvation but surrounding nations as well. When Joseph's brothers came to Egypt, seeking to buy grain so they wouldn't starve, Joseph had the right and the power to punish them. Instead he saw God's hand in all the events of his life and forgave his brothers, saying, "*You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good . . .*" (Genesis 50:20).

As stewards, we work and serve under God's direction. We use our gifts wherever he places us and we work for him, not for Earthly bosses. We acknowledge that he is the one who gives us our gifts and enables and equips us to use them. And we thank him, giving him the credit, for it is his due.

# Brother Steward

## Send a Valentine to God!

*For centuries, every day we Monks dedicated our work, our prayers, and our talents to God. We toiled in the fields for the love of God. We made casks for wine and caskets for the deceased for the love of God.*



*And we said prayers and sang hymns for the love of God every day. And now comes Saint Valentine's Day! For this special day, let us do something extra for the love of God.*

*Say an extra prayer in thanks for all the gifts he has given us. Cheer up a lonely relative or a sick friend with a call or visit. Send a valentine to our ministries by donating the price of a box of candy to the offertory collection.*



*God showers us with his love every day. On February 14, let us send him a valentine!*

*May God bless you!*

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## A Lenten Tale

*A young Italian Monk in the early 600's made a special Lenten bread of water, flour, and salt. To remind his brothers that Lent was a time of prayer, he took strips of dough and folded them over like crossed arms, which was the popular prayer position of the day. They were called "bracellae," the Latin word for "little arms."*

*From that, the Germans derived the word "bretzel," which eventually became our "pretzel." With the beginning of Lent, whether we fold our arms or clasp our hands, prayer and good works are the essential ingredients of our stewardship and our faithful commitment to the Lenten liturgy.*

*We should make an extra effort to spend more time in prayer, use our talents to help the needy, and support our ministries through offertory collections.*

*Finally, a suggestion if you are fasting: cut out the chips; but keep the pretzels.*

*God Bless.*

