

Dear Friends:

First of all, I want to thank all of you who for your Christmas and New Year wishes, your kind words and gifts. They are greatly appreciated. I also want to reiterate Deacon Terry's thank you last week to all of those who helped ensure that our Christmas Liturgies were a fitting tribute to our King!

There are a lot of important things happening in the next couple of weeks that we need your help with:

1. As we mentioned last weekend, we need your help in identifying young men and women from our parish whom you feel God may be calling to commit their lives in service to God and His Church through priesthood or Religious Life. You can fill out the cards in the pews and drop them in the collection basket. One of the priests will follow up with each of the names that are submitted and then we will have a group gathering with all of them sometime in February and help them in beginning to discern God's call.
2. Next weekend, we will be asking your help with a postcard campaign to our US Senator and Representatives asking them to oppose the Freedom of Choice Act (FOCA). Bishop Sartain has asked all parishes in the Diocese to participate in this crucial postcard campaign. As Bishop Sartain states: *"I am gravely concerned about a piece of legislation under consideration for some time, the "Freedom of Choice Act" (FOCA). This legislation, which could be re-introduced in the near future and would likely be supported by powerful members of the House and Senate, would not only take us away from the vision of a reversal of Roe vs. Wade – it could also remove virtually all restrictions on abortion nationwide, including parents' right to be involved in their minor daughter's decision, prohibitions of partial birth abortion, and restrictions which protect women from unsafe abortion. It could permit non-physicians to perform abortions and require federal funding of abortions. It could also violate the conscience rights of doctors, nurses and hospitals."* Please take time after Mass on the weekend of the 17th and 18th to stop by one of the tables in the narthex to address and sign the postcards. Your \$1.00 donation will also help to cover the cost of mailing the postcards.
3. THE GIFT continues. Our first round of commitments to The Gift yielded only about 400 responses. If you have not yet made a commitment to The Gift, we ask you to please make a commitment of Time, Talent and Treasure using the card you received in November or the new card that will be mailed to you next week. It is important that each parish family make a commitment to Stewardship. Remember, it is not the size of your gift, but the sacrificial nature of the gift that is important in offering your time, talent and treasure. Even if you are unable to make a regular commitment to a monetary gift or if you cannot make a gift equal or greater than what you have done in the past, please fill out a card. We are trying to get a good sense of the amount of time our parishioners are spending with the Lord in prayer. It is also important to know how many people are continuing in their ministries and what new people are looking to get involved. Your stewardship commitments are vital to the future of our parish community, so please respond in the next week or two.

So, please consider assisting us in each of the above areas so that we can make a meaningful change in our parish, our diocese and our country. Your help is deeply appreciated. May God bless you with a happy and healthy 2009!

Peace,