

## A Christmas gift worth gold

Bill Zalot | Dec. 23, 2011



(M Scott)

### *Christmas*

Aaron is a nephew and my godson. This year he made his confirmation. On Thanksgiving day, he asked me what I wanted for Christmas. I didn't respond immediately. "I have to give this some thought," I said.

The next day I phoned his home, and spoke to my sister, his mom, and told her, "Aaron asked me yesterday what I wanted from him for Christmas. Tell him, I've thought about it, and all I want from him is time we can spend together."

Giving your time and presence to another is a gift more precious than gold.

To understand my answer, you have to know more about me. I have spastic cerebral palsy. I am 51 years old, and depend on others to bathe, dress and shave me. I spend up to 16 hours a day in my wheelchair. Few people in my life look beyond my physical limitations.

I guess this is one of the reasons why I consider the gift of another person's time and presence so valuable. This idea was reinforced for me recently when I read a feature in *Guideposts Magazine*.

I'll paraphrase the story: A woman gave to a friend who had just lost her husband 12 coupons for homemade cakes and pies to be redeemed whenever her friend needed her spirits lifted. The widow did as her friend asked: When she felt the need, she redeemed a coupon, but she soon learned that with each coupon, more than a cake or pie was given. Their friendship was rekindled.

Each visit to deliver a cake or pie triggered memories that brought laughter and tears as the women reconnected. Soon they realized it was as if the two schoolgirls had never lost touch.

The pies and cakes were just a springboard to renewing this friendship. Conversations and being together healed a bond that had been broken by the separate paths these two women had taken.

I can relate to this story. I have a friend whom I used to meet regularly, but whom I seldom see now. We met

decades ago while volunteering for a Catholic radio and television program, "Our Lady of Fatima." Though we no longer work for the radio and television ministry and we seldom see each other, we remain good friends.

Hardly a week has gone by that we don't touch base and check on one another. Whenever one of us experiences a loss or a victory in life, the other is there to share the moment. I think that is why our friendship works.

You could say that you can't give the gift of yourself without getting a gift in return. For years now, another friend of mine has given me a subscription to St. Anthony Messenger magazine. When each month's issue arrives, I am reminded to pray for her and to contact her.

In conclusion, if my nephew takes my suggestion, we both may get a Christmas surprise. Both our lives will be richer.

Merry Christmas and may the peace of Christ be yours now and throughout the coming year!

[Bill Zalot writes from Levittown, Pa.]

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