

From the desk of Fr. Tim

MAKING A PLEDGE

Our parish stewardship campaign is underway. Please return your pledge cards by December 2nd.

In our world we are inundated with requests for money. The parish has to fit itself into a flood of pressure to give. In days past there was no competition. The parish was among only a very few who sought contributions from our parishioners. Now the list is very long. As we make decisions about how we are going to support our parish and other organizations, perhaps some points of reflection and guidance would be helpful.

Sacrificial Giving: The keystone of Christian stewardship is the Cross. Jesus gives himself for the salvation of humanity. Without the Cross of Jesus we are doomed. He calls us to “take up our cross and follow him.” His love for us is overwhelming. Everything good about our life depends on his loving care. The very purpose of our existence, our satisfaction that our life has value, the hope for joy and eternal life, all depend on the love relationship that is formed in us by the Holy Spirit. Our giving helps us to grow in this love.

The tithe: The standard for giving reflected in the Bible is the tithe. We might come up with all kinds of explanations for why this is not applicable, but it remains the standard from which we have to evaluate our giving. Obviously, the work of the spreading the Gospel, caring for the poor, worshipping God all take money to fulfill in our world. Excusing ourselves from the obligation to support the parish makes no sense. The tithe, ten percent of our gross income, is the initial goal of Christian stewardship. The benefits of tithing are immense and include a more balanced approach to our finances, a sense of doing what is right, a strengthening of our participation in the life of the parish, and personal proof that God does not turn his face from a cheerful giver.

Growth in percentage giving: The gradual ascent of the soul to God is at least one model of the Christian Life. It makes good sense, because the human heart must be formed over time. Starting with a few percent of our income and growing every year will insure a more successful stewardship plan. A typical starting point is three or four percent. This would mean that in six or seven years you will be tithing and the benefits of spiritual peace will follow. Throughout the year opportunities present themselves, perhaps sent to us by God, and as we examine our finances we can leap ahead in this growth process. Some planning is, however, a support to this growth. Approaching our stewardship in an organized fashion is consonant with all our efforts at spiritual growth. There must be order and discipline to our life if transformation is to take place. Good and faithful stewardship is a key part of this effort.

Make a pledge: A stewardship pledge is a promise to give a set amount to do our part in supporting the work of the parish. This is a great preventative to the temptation to give only haphazardly. One of the great challenges of our time is to overcome the temptation to be an occasional participant in Mass. This is not the way of the Lord. Measured, disciplined effort is the path that leads to holiness and peace. Making a pledge helps us to keep our selfishness in check and encourages a heroic effort.

Operating Fund/Building Fund: In our parish there are two active funds to receive our giving, the Building Trust Fund, and the Operating Fund, which supports the day-to-day operation of the parish. We currently have a somewhat natural balance between these funds. The Building Fund is, however, a restricted fund and can only be used for repayment of the building debt or construction. Parishioners may put a portion of their giving in both funds, or all of their giving in only one fund.

Thank you: Our parish has proven very prudent in its stewardship support. For some there is a need to make substantial beginning in their support but in general the parish continues to demonstrate great strength in our support. Thank you for your faithfulness and may God bless you and your family because of what you do.