

PARISH WEEKLY COLLECTION

(FOR OUR PARISH MINISTRIES, OUR PEOPLE AND OUR FUTURE)

PRIORITIZING THE LORD’S PORTION FOR OUR PARISH (OFFERING:

Beloved, I thank you for your extraordinary faith commitment to God – in Time, Talent and Treasure – toward the growth of our beloved parish community of St. Rose of Lima. May God bless you abundantly through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Please, kindly permit me to offer these thoughts on the stewardship of treasure. Our giving is an act of worship of God; it is done in gratitude to God for all His inestimable blessings and favors. All we have and are come from God. The Psalmist says, *“The earth is the LORD's and the fulness thereof, the world and those who dwell therein”* (Ps 24:1). Hence, the same Psalmist teaches us how to respond to God in worship and adoration, placing ourselves – all we have and are at His service, saying: *“What shall I render to the LORD for all his bounty to me? I will lift up the cup of salvation and call on the name of the LORD, I will pay my vows to the LORD in the presence of all his people”* (Ps 116:12-14). In his way, he anticipated the worship of God at Mass; the cup of salvation is the chalice of the blood of Christ. Hence, we speak about Eucharistic Offering at Mass.

Our contribution at Mass is therefore EUCHARISTIC OFFERING: It is not just a donation or a gift, it is about the gift of self to God and is required by God, a command of God. It cannot be treated as “anything” is ok. Remember, that was the mentality of Cain and God rejected His offering (cf. Gen 4:5)

In the course of time Cain brought to the LORD an offering of the fruit of the ground, and Abel brought of the firstlings of his flock and of their fat portions. And the LORD had regard for Abel and his offering, but for Cain and his offering he had no regard. So Cain was very angry, and his countenance fell” (Gen 4:3-5).

Simply put, God revealed to us that He does not accept every offering. The onus is on us to aspire to make our sacrifices acceptable. We want to approach GIVING or OFFERING with the mentality of Abel, a sacrificial giving to God – SOMETHING PRE-PLANNED or BUDGETED. God accepts such offerings (cf. Gen 4:4). Thus, each weekend, in making my offertory as truly a spiritual exercise, I should ask myself: Based on all the blessings God has lavished upon me in my life, is this offering good enough to offer to God? Will this offering be acceptable in the sight of the Lord? On the whole, God wants us to give freely and willingly, not out of compulsion, as we see from the passages below:

And Kore the son of Imnah the Levite, keeper of the east gate, was over the freewill offerings to God, to apportion the contribution reserved for the LORD and the most holy offerings” (2Chro 31:14).

And those descendants of Levi who receive the priestly office have a commandment in the law to take tithes from the people, that is, from their brethren, though these also are descended from Abraham. (Heb 7:5).

Now it is superfluous for me to write to you about the offering for the saints, for I know your readiness, of which I boast about you to the people of Macedonia, saying that Achaia has been ready since last year; and your zeal has stirred up most of them. But I am sending the brethren so that our boasting about you may not prove vain in this case, so that you may be ready, as I said you would be; lest if some Macedonians come with me and find that you are not ready, we be humiliated--to say nothing of you – for being so confident. So I thought it necessary to urge the brethren to go on to you before me, and arrange in advance for this gift you have promised, so that it may be ready not as an exaction but as a willing gift. The point is this: he who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and he who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. Each one must do as he has made up his mind, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. And God is able to provide you with every blessing in abundance, so that you may always have enough of everything and may provide in abundance for every good work (2Cor 9:2-8).

Am I committed in making my appropriate TITHE OFFERINGS to God with all my heart?

DISMISSING THE MYTH OF “TITHING AS A PROTESTANT THING”

One of the erroneous convictions among most Catholics is that “Tithing is a Protestant Thing”. Nothing is farther from the truth. We have seen that not all offerings are pleasing to God. Thus, we must ask, “WHAT IS THE BASIC OFFERING REQUIRED?” Biblically and from Sacred Tradition, at the risk of oversimplification, the basic requirement in the Old Testament is to tithe 10% of one’s total income. Surely, the New Testament has no basic requirement? Baloney! In fact, in the New Testament, Christ challenges us to do more than the Old Testament level (cf. Matt 5:20f). Thus, again, at the risk of oversimplification, the bare minimum all Christians should aspire to make is to “tithe” 10.1%. We shall explain below:

OLD TESTAMENT REVELATION ON TITHING: “The Lord’s Portion”

All the tithe of the land, whether of the seed of the land or of the fruit of the trees, is the LORD's; it is holy to the LORD (Lev 27:30).

To the Levites I have given every tithe in Israel for an inheritance, in return for their service which they serve, their service in the tent of meeting (Num 18:21).

Moreover you shall say to the Levites, 'When you take from the people of Israel the tithe which I have given you from them for your inheritance, then you shall present an offering from it to the LORD, a tithe of the tithe (Num 18:26).

So shall you also present an offering to the LORD from all your tithes, which you receive from the people of Israel; and from it you shall give the LORD's offering to Aaron the priest (Num 18:28).

When you have finished paying all the tithe of your produce in the third year, which is the year of tithing, giving it to the Levite, the sojourner, the fatherless, and the widow, that they may eat within your towns and be filled, then you shall say before the LORD your God, 'I have removed the sacred portion out of my house, and moreover I have given it to the Levite, the sojourner, the fatherless, and the widow, according to all thy commandment which thou hast commanded me; I have not transgressed any of thy commandments, neither have I forgotten them; I have not eaten of the tithe while I was mourning, or removed any of it while I was unclean, or offered any of it to the dead; I have obeyed the voice of the LORD my God, I have done according to all that thou hast commanded me (Deut 26:12-14).

And the priest, the son of Aaron, shall be with the Levites when the Levites receive the tithes; and the Levites shall bring up the tithe of the tithes to the house of our God, to the chambers, to the storehouse. For the people of Israel and the sons of Levi shall bring the contribution of grain, wine, and oil to the chambers, where are the vessels of the sanctuary, and the priests that minister, and the gatekeepers and the singers. We will not neglect the house of our God. (Neh. 10:38-39).

Then all Judah brought the tithe of the grain, wine, and oil into the storehouses. And I appointed as treasurers over the storehouses Shelemiah the priest, Zadok the scribe, and Pedaiah of the Levites, and as their assistant Hanan the son of Zaccur, son of Mattaniah, for they were counted faithful; and their duty was to distribute to their brethren. (Neh. 13:12-13).

CAN ONE OFFER MORE THAN THE REQUIRED TITHE IN THE OLD TESTAMENT?

Certainly! As we can clearly see from the below quotation, there were other collections apart from tithes in the Old Testament:

Speak to the people of Israel, that they take for me an offering; from every man whose heart makes him willing you shall receive the offering for me. And this is the offering which you shall receive from them: gold, silver, and bronze, blue and purple and scarlet stuff and fine twined linen, goats' hair, tanned rams' skins, goatskins, acacia wood, oil for the lamps, spices for the anointing oil and for the fragrant incense, onyx stones, and stones for setting, for the ephod and for the breast piece. And let them make me a sanctuary, that I may dwell in their midst. (Exod. 25:2-8).

Thus, after one has given what is required (tithe), anything above is rightfully an additional donation or offering in love. It is an act of aspiring to greater commitment to God in love. Jesus indirectly encouraged this when he declared, *“For I tell you, unless your righteousness exceeds that of the Scribes and Pharisees, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven”* (Matt 5:20). The Pharisees would only do what the Law stipulated (namely 10%), but Jesus challenges us to do more than the required. This brings us to the New Testament position on tithing.

NEW TESTAMENT FULFILLMENT REVELATION ON TITHING: The Lord’s Portion

Before we hastily dismiss tithing as a Protestant Thing, it is important to take a second look at the stand of the Scriptures: First, since tithing is a command of the Law, what did Jesus say about the Law of Tithing? Did he say it was abolished? Nowhere did he say that. Instead, he declares,

Think not that I have come to abolish the law and the prophets; I have come not to abolish them but to fulfill them. For truly, I say to you, till heaven and earth

pass away, not an iota, not a dot, will pass from the law until all is accomplished. Whoever then relaxes one of the least of these commandments and teaches men so, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but he who does them and teaches them shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven. (Matt 5:17-19).

From his indictment of the Pharisees below, we see that Christ actually endorses tithing as something we “should be doing” along with the other requirements of God.

Woe to you, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for you tithe mint and dill and cumin, and have neglected the weightier matters of the law, justice and mercy and faith; **these you ought to have done**, without neglecting the others (Matt 23:23; Luke 11:42).

WHY DID TITHING (10%) APPEAR ALMOST “ABSENT” THEN IN THE NEW TESTAMENT?

One explanation is found in the Parable of the Sower. Although all received the word of God, some bore seeds not just 10-fold (10%); but a hundredfold (100%), some sixty (60%), some thirty (30%) of stewardship yields or returns.

A sower went out to sow. And as he sowed, some seeds fell along the path, and the birds came and devoured them. Other seeds fell on rocky ground, where they had not much soil, and immediately they sprang up, since they had no depth of soil, but when the sun rose they were scorched; and since they had no root they withered away. Other seeds fell upon thorns, and the thorns grew up and choked them. Other seeds fell on good soil and brought forth grain, some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty (Matt. 13:3-8).

One may quickly dismiss the above as a “parable” and therefore unreal. But wait a minute! The knowledge of this parable among the early Christians, perhaps, was chiefly responsible for their overwhelming response to stewardship of treasure. They exceeded the tithe level as we see below:

There was not a needy person among them, for as many as were possessors of lands or houses sold them, and brought the proceeds of what was sold and laid it at the apostles' feet; and distribution was made to each as any had need. Thus Joseph who was surnamed by the apostles Barnabas (which means, Son of

encouragement), a Levite, a native of Cyprus, sold a field which belonged to him, and brought the money and laid it at the apostles' feet. (Acts 4:34-37).

Please, be a committed giver; allow God to use you to bless our parish and our diocese. May God bless us with many and abundant sons and daughters of encouragement. This need of exceptional responses was also acknowledged by St. Paul as seen in the passages below:

And you Philippians yourselves know that in the beginning of the gospel, when I left Macedonia, no church entered into partnership with me in giving and receiving except you only; for even in Thessalonica, you sent me help once and again. Not that I seek the gift; but I seek the fruit which increases to your credit. **I have received full payment, and more; I am filled**, having received from Epaphroditus the gifts you sent, a fragrant offering, a sacrifice acceptable and pleasing to God. And my God will supply every need of yours according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus” (Phil 4:15-19).

Let the elders who rule well **be considered worthy of double honor**, especially those who labor in preaching and teaching; for the scripture says, "You shall not muzzle an ox when it is treading out the grain," and, "**The laborer deserves his wages**” (1Tim 5:17-18).

Hence, Jesus and the apostles encourage **YOU** to do more than the tithe level through the following teaching:

Give, and it will be given to you; good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, will be put into your lap. For the measure you give will be the measure you get back (Luke 6:38).

This is why the emphasis on the tithe appears to be silent. People would do the required amount; but they were encouraged to do even more than the minimum. Hence, these lines from the New Testament: *“For the measure you give will be the measure you get back” and “...he who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and he who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully.”* If one goes to an Elementary, Middle School, High School, or College and scores 10% in each subject in the examination; could the person be declared as an “Excellent Student?” Would you tell a student who scores between 90% and 100% in school grades to only aspire to score 10%? That is why the New Testament did not emphasize the minimum required stewardship of

resources: The Lord's Portion. Just as Christ in the New Testament did more than Moses in the Old Testament, we are encouraged to do more, NEVER less. **THINK ABOUT IT: Should Old Testament people be more renowned for their stewardship of treasure (10%) than modern Christians who are unwilling to commit the basic 10%?**

CONCLUSION:

My dearest friends in Christ, let us therefore rise up and shine more and more in our commitment for the growth of our parish community. Our God can replenish us abundantly according to His riches and glory (cf. Phil 4:19).

STEWARDSHIP PRAYER

Lord, Almighty and Bountiful God, through the Holy Spirit inspire me with your holy words: "Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. Each one must do as he has made up his mind, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver" (2Cor. 9:6-7). Help me to realize my need for individual stewardship of Time, Talent and Treasure. Give me a generous heart. In Jesus' name, I pray. Amen

STEWARDSHIP FACTS

We currently have over 900 ACTUAL registered families in our parish. If 450 families contributed each week (1/2 of our registration)

Percent given	Amount per week	Family Annual total (50 wks)	Total offertory per week
1%	\$6.00	\$300	\$2,700
2%	\$12.00	\$600	\$5,400
3%	\$18.00	\$900	\$8,100
4%	\$24.00	\$1200	\$10,800
5%	\$30.00	\$1500	\$13,500
6%	\$36.00	\$1800	\$16,200
7%	\$42.00	\$2100	\$18,900
8%	\$48.00	\$2400	\$21,600
9%	\$54.00	\$2700	\$24,300
10%	\$60.00	\$3000	\$27,000

If 300 families contributed each week (1/3 of our registration)

Percent given	Amount per week	Family Annual total (50 wks)	Total offertory per week
1%	\$6.00	\$300	\$1,800
2%	\$12.00	\$600	\$3,600
3%	\$18.00	\$900	\$5,400
4%	\$24.00	\$1200	\$7,200
5%	\$30.00	\$1500	\$9,000
6%	\$36.00	\$1800	\$10,800
7%	\$42.00	\$2100	\$12,600
8%	\$48.00	\$2400	\$14,400
9%	\$54.00	\$2700	\$16,200
10%	\$60.00	\$3000	\$18,000

WEEKLY STEWARDSHIP OF TREASURE, THE LORD'S PORTION GUIDE

The median income for Osceola County residents in Poinciana-Kissimmee is about \$44,000.

Total Income	1%	2%	3%	4%	5%	6%	7%	8%	9%	10%
\$10,000.00	\$2.00	\$4.00	\$6.00	\$8.00	\$10.00	\$12.00	\$14.00	\$16.00	\$18.00	\$20.00
\$20,000.00	\$4.00	\$8.00	\$12.00	\$16.00	\$20.00	\$24.00	\$28.00	\$32.00	\$36.00	\$40.00
\$30,000.00	\$6.00	\$12.00	\$18.00	\$24.00	\$30.00	\$36.00	\$42.00	\$48.00	\$54.00	\$60.00
\$40,000.00	\$8.00	\$16.00	\$24.00	\$32.00	\$40.00	\$48.00	\$56.00	\$64.00	\$72.00	\$80.00
\$50,000.00	\$10.00	\$20.00	\$30.00	\$40.00	\$50.00	\$60.00	\$70.00	\$80.00	\$90.00	\$100.00
\$60,000.00	\$12.00	\$24.00	\$36.00	\$48.00	\$60.00	\$72.00	\$84.00	\$96.00	\$108.00	\$120.00

Are you able and willing to exceed the 10% Old Testament level of giving? If not, please, let us always have some respect for the Pharisee in the Gospels. He was able to do 10% religiously. The ONLY problem was that he boasted of it. LOL: *"The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, 'God, I thank*

*thee that I am not like other men, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even like this tax collector. I fast twice a week, **I give tithes of all that I get**'* (Luke 18:11-12). What a challenge for us Christians!