

September 20, 2009

Dear Parishioners,

As you heard in the homily of September 12/13 when I spoke of the Diocesan Annual Appeal and parish finances, income from parishioners attending our three English masses was down about \$75,000 during the last fiscal year.

- If that was the consequence of national economic conditions that negatively affected your ability to contribute, I thank you for doing as much as you could in a difficult financial situation.
- If, for some reason, your financial commitment to the parish and its ministries has simply lagged, I ask you to reconsider your level of parish support and increase it.

Please consider biblically based stewardship and a commitment to sacrificial giving. The principles are simple:

- Give in gratitude. Often we give grudgingly. God has given gladly and generously to us; we should respond by giving gladly and generously in return.
- Give sacrificially. God did. It's easy to tell ourselves that we have given enough – but in this materialistic and consumer oriented society, it's easy to fool ourselves.
- Give a tithe. The Biblical gives 10 percent as the norm. Give 5 percent to the Sunday collection. Give 1 percent to the DAA; use the other 4 percent for other charitable needs, which includes Catholic School Tuition, religious education fees, and all of the other organizations and causes to which you are asked to contribute.
- Give regularly. It's suggested that you give weekly, as an act of devotion, placing something in the collection basket as a symbolic way of offering yourself. But whether you choose weekly, bi-weekly, monthly, quarterly or annually, - or by way of automatic withdrawal - it doesn't matter – as long as it is regular.

St. Mary Parish has made much progress financially in the past six years. We have gone from a parish regularly in need of borrowing money for operating expenses to a parish that will soon be out of debt, thanks to all who give to our regular needs and our "pink envelope" debt reduction campaign.

Let us continue this positive momentum. Trusting that news reports announcing "the recession is over" and there will be an economic upturn from which we will benefit, please faithfully and generously support St. Mary Parish.

Thank you for all you do.

Fr. Bruce

Stewardship Worksheet

"Your heavenly Father knows what you need.
Seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness,
and all these things will be given you besides.
Do not worry about tomorrow; tomorrow will take care of itself.
Sufficient for a day is its own evil."
(Matthew 6, 23-34)

To live a life of biblically-based stewardship

- **Give gratefully**
 - **Give sacrificially**
 - **Give a tithe**
 - **Give regularly,**

Please complete the simple 2-step process below.

1. Reflect on the importance of your family, your Faith, your Church and pray the following prayer.

Father,
you are the Creator of all, you are the Source of all that is good,
you have blessed us with a share of all that you have made.
Sometimes we wonder if it is enough and we seek more,
but we know that true happiness is not found in possessions.
In faith, we believe that you care for us in all our needs.
In hope, we trust that you will bless us through our generous sacrifice.
In love, we offer you a generous portion of the resources that you have
given us.
Help us to walk in faith, hope and love.
We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

2. Complete the information below.

- Depending on which form you use, enter the amount from line 4 of your 1040 EZ federal tax form, **or** line 22 from your 1040 form **or** line 15 from your 1040-A form _____
- Determine 5% of that amount by multiplying the above figure by .05 and enter here _____
- Please consider increasing your church support to this amount.