



**DEDICATION OF THE LATERAN BASILICA  
IN ROME  
November 9, 2014 A**

**STEWARDSHIP OF TREASURE SUNDAY  
ANNUAL FISCAL REPORT**

On this annual Stewardship of Treasury Sunday, I wish, first of all, to offer a big *thank you* to all of you who week after week, month after month and year after year faithfully share with your parish family a portion of your financial resources. Your faithful and generous giving enables us to pay a fair wage to our full-time and part-time parish staff who maintain our facilities, oversee the daily administration of the parish and many of our ministries.

**The way we make and use our money is a spirituality issue.**

An old and wise maxim concerning the spiritual life goes: “The spiritual life is *all* life” and not just those times when we pray and come to Church. If the spiritual life is *all* of life, then the way we deal with our relationships and with life’s hurts and losses, as well as the way we handle our money, either helps or hurts our relationship with God. When we see financial resources as a gift from God and prayerfully seek to be wise and generous stewards of this gift, we impact in a positive way our relationship with God. On the other hand, when we leave God out of this area of our life and choose to be greedy and not generous with our financial resources, we hurt our relationship with God.

Some years ago, I read that there are over 2,300 verses in the Bible about money, possessions and the right management of them, and only 500 verses that relate to prayer and faith. Isn’t that amazing! I wonder why the Bible talks so much about money way more than I do! Might it be because God is very aware of how preoccupation with money (especially when we have a sufficient amount of it to pay our bills) can be a big distraction and how misuse of money can hurt our relationship with him?

**Practical suggestions to prayerfully consider:**

**1. Giving something to the offertory collection basket is always way better than giving nothing.**

Giving nothing to the offertory collection is a vote—intended or unintended—to close the parish. While I feel I am pretty sensitive and often helpful to families who are going through a difficult time financially, I firmly believe it is an act of faith in God to *give something* to the offertory collection no matter how poor we are. Remember how Jesus praised the poor widow for her contribution of a few pennies saying that she gave more than all the rest considering her financial situation.

**2. If currently your practice is to give “loose change” to the offertory collection, consider moving to the next step.**

The next step up from being a “loose change” giver is to become a “percentage giver.” After prayerful reflection, most of us would agree that God’s work carried out week after week in every parish deserves more than our loose change, especially when we are in a position to give more than loose change.

When it comes to this aspect of our spiritual life, most ‘percentage givers’ to the offertory collection would say that ‘doing the math’ was a significant and important step. When we have the courage to ‘do the math,’ we may discover that we are more generous than we thought or we may discover that we are not as generous as we thought.

If you are in a position to increase your level of giving, please consider doing so. Beginning this weekend, I am increasing my weekly donation by \$2.00. This may not sound a whole lot, but if *many* people decide to increase their level of giving, the aggregate amount could be very significant.

**Work towards or beyond the biblical ideal of tithes.**

In the Old Testament, there are several references to tithing. God asked Israel to give a tithe, i.e., 10%, of the harvest to the Temple. In the Book of Sirach, God’s word says to us: “*With each contribution, show a cheerful countenance, and pay your tithes with a spirit of joy. Give to the Lord as he has given to you, generously, according to your means*” (35:8-9).

Giving 10% (5% to Church and 5% to charity) is something that most Christians, including myself, move towards *gradually*. If you are currently not giving 10% of your income but could without too much sacrifice, you might ask yourself what holds you back from taking this step. For me, it seemed like a really big step, so the *gradual steps* helped me a lot as it didn't seem so painful after all. What might hold you back from taking the step to give a full tithe to Church and charity?

**Five reasons to be serious and generous with our financial resources:**

**1. *God expects us to do so.*** Every day in my morning prayer, I thank God for the material and spiritual blessings in my life. But I also know that the best way to show my gratitude is by generously sharing both of these blessings with the Church family and wider community I belong to. God did not bless me so that I could be greedy; he blessed me so that I can bless others.

**2. *We could have been born in a slum here or elsewhere.*** Every day, millions of our brothers and sisters in our global family deal with gross poverty. By an accident of birth, we were fortunate enough not to have been one of them. Reflecting on this reality should be reason enough for all of us to be very generous with the financial blessings that we enjoy.

**3. *Consistent financial giving is God's cure for greedy tendencies.*** If grief work is God's cure for dealing with a loss and forgiveness is God's cure for healing a hurt, consistent financial giving is God's cure for the greedy tendencies in us. It's amazing how easily greed can take hold of us—whether we are poor or rich. Some poor and rich people are very generous, and other poor and rich people are very greedy.

**4. *Generous financial giving makes us a little more like our good and generous God.*** If forgiving life's hurts makes me more like a forgiving God, generous giving of our financial resources makes us more like our good and generous God.

**5. *Experience the joy of giving.*** There is real joy in giving. I am sure many of you have experienced it.

I conclude with a favorite Scripture passage on financial giving: "*Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth.... Rather store up treasures in heaven*" (Matt 6:19-20). Additionally, it has been said: "*We cannot take our money with us, but we can*

*send it ahead of us by supporting the mission of the Church. In doing so, we store up treasures in heaven."*

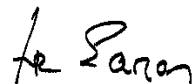
***Eight levels of giving to our Sunday offertory collection***

**Weekly, we average \$2,195 in loose change. This past fiscal year, we received \$114,140 in loose change.**

**Tithe report for the past fiscal year**

We are probably one of the few parishes which each year sets aside a sizable position of our income for outreach to the needy at home and abroad. I see such giving as a response to the Gospel mandate to reach out to those in need. This past fiscal year, we gave \$117,640. The big beneficiaries were our ***Sister Diocese*** in the Dominican Republic (\$35,000); ***Community of Hope*** (\$26,000 – more about this wonderful organization in two weeks); ***Space Coast Center for Women with Children*** (16,000); parish families and individuals in need (\$10,714); ***Catholic Relief Services*** (\$7,500); ***Helping Hands*** (food-packing event that took place at our parish where we packed 20,000 meals for Africa); ***Holy Name's Hearts Out to Haiti*** program (\$6,000); ***Solar Lights to Africa*** (\$4,500) done by a local Episcopal church; ***Genesis House*** (\$3,000). \$1,000 went to eight other ministries that help the needy.

Have a blessed week,



***Stewardship Prayer***

***Generous and loving God,  
You call us to be disciples of your Son Jesus  
and good stewards of your many gifts.  
Open our minds and hearts to a greater  
Awareness and deeper appreciation of your  
countless blessings.  
Transform us through the power of your Spirit  
to nurture a Stewardship way of life  
marked by faith-filled prayer,  
service to our neighbor, and generous sharing.  
Teach us to be faithful servants of your gifts.  
With Mary's help, may we return ten-fold  
the gifts entrusted to us.  
We pray through Christ, our Lord. Amen.***

**- Bishop Robert Morneau**