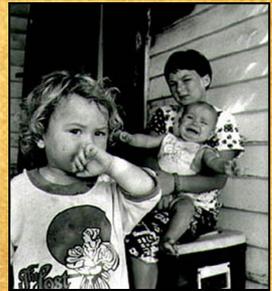


ST. MICHAEL
Catholic Church

Matthew 25 Initiative

"Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you or see you thirsty and give you drink? When did we welcome you away from home or clothe you in your nakedness? When did we visit you when you were ill or in prison? The king will answer them: "Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers or sisters of mine, you did for me."

-Matthew 25:37-40



Who are the Least of my Brothers and Sisters?

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Matthew 25 Initiative

In the final judgment, Jesus identifies himself with the poor and the needy. When we feed the hungry, give drink to the thirsty, clothe the naked, welcome the stranger, visit the sick and those in prison, we are doing for Jesus. From the beginning of the church, Christians have been caring for the poor as part of their faith in Jesus.

Our Sunday and Holy Day offertory collections provide the financial means to carry on the mission of our parish. Caring for the poor is part of the St. Michael Parish mission.

We ask each parishioner to live out the biblical concept of stewardship by giving the first portion of their income to God as an expression of gratitude that everything we have comes from God. The Matthew 25 Initiative grew out of the Stewardship Commission's desire to put this into practice at the parish level. We wanted our parish to lead by example.

After over a year of study, our Stewardship Commission decided to adopt the model in use at St. John Student Parish in East Lansing. The first 5% of every Sunday and Holy Day collection is given to a designated charity that serves those in dire need. During the 6 Sundays of Lent, the percentage of giving is doubled to 10%. After a series of Town Hall Meetings in the Fall of 2012, we began implementing our Matthew 25 Initiative in Lent 2013. Beginning with 2% of our Sunday offertory, each year we have increased the percentage given and since the 2016-17 Fiscal Year, we have been at the 5% level of giving.



How are the charities selected?

The charities are selected by the Matthew 25 Committee using the following criteria: they serve those in dire need (provide life sustaining services, such as food, water, shelter, and medical care), they are not in violation of Catholic values, and the money raised will go to those in need.

Can I recommend a charity?

Yes, any parishioner may propose a charity. Proposal forms are available online, in the parish office, and in the back of church.

How do we know the charities are on the up and up?

One of the roles of the committee is to investigate each proposed charity. Charity Navigator and other tools are used. We seek to find out what percent is spent on fundraising and administration. Each charity must have a United States address and bank account.



Are local charities included?

Yes, the Matthew 25 Initiative builds upon what our parish is already doing for local charities, such as SIREN/ Eaton Shelter, GLEAP, and our own St. Vincent de Paul Society. At the same time, Matthew 25 has a global outreach. John 3:16 begins: "God so loved the world..." We are made in the image and likeness of God, so as we seek to provide for those in dire need, we do so both locally and around the world. One of the components of Matthew 25 includes a petition in the General Intercessions each week for those served by the designated Matthew 25 charity, a way to be connected to our brothers and sisters in Christ both near and far.



How will we know which charities are selected?

After the committee meets to determine the charities for the next quarter (3 months), the designated charities are posted on our parish website. Each week in the bulletin, the current recipient is listed, along with the amount donated to the recipient from the previous week and a description of the designated charity for the coming week. Before each weekend liturgy begins, the sequence on the TV monitors includes the designated charity for the week with a brief description.

How can I become a member of the Matthew 25 Committee?

Every year in March our parish conducts our Stewardship of Talent. Parishioners are invited to prayerfully discern how they can best serve the mission of the parish. If you are interested in helping our parish evaluate and choose our Matthew 25 designated charities just mark it on your Talent Form. Members serve 3 year terms. For more information, please contact a current committee member or Father Jim.

How does this impact other budgets, such as parish school and parish staff? What happens if we need repairs? Are we saving for that?

Saving for needed repairs and paying a just wage to our employees are two of our priorities as a faith community. Will there be enough for all of our priorities and needs as a parish? Making Matthew 25 a priority is a matter of faith and trust in God. The experience of households and parishes who practice stewardship, receiving everything gratefully as a gift from God and giving the “first fruits” back to God as an expression that everything comes from God, has been that God is faithful. If we are good stewards with our resources as households and as a parish, we believe God will provide us with what we need to be about the mission God has entrusted to us.

Why are we doing this as a parish? Why not just let people donate to the charities?

This is not meant to take the place of our individual and group giving. We still have collections/envelopes for the needs of the wider church. This is an added dimension. It is based on our belief in the Eucharist. In the Eucharist, we see Jesus giving Himself completely for us and sharing with us the gift of Himself, the Bread

of Life. From the time Christians first gathered in His name, gifts were brought forward to the altar for the needs of the Church and for the needs of the poor. When we include in our Sunday and Holy Day Offertory gifts for those in dire need, we are expressing solidarity with believers in Christ throughout the centuries, as well as a desire to be like Jesus.

Are other parishes doing this?

Yes, some of the parishes locally that are involved in similar giving are St. John Church Student Center and St. Thomas Aquinas Parish, both in East Lansing, and Immaculate Heart of Mary Parish in Lansing. Many of the parishes involved with the International Catholic Stewardship Council participate.

If I give monthly, quarterly, or annually, how will my offering be divided among the designated charities?

If you give electronically, we are able to allocate your offering to each of the charities designated during the set time period. If you give by check or cash, it will go towards the charity designated for whatever Sunday it is received.





What if I wish to give directly to the week's designated charity?

If you would like to see a particular charity receive more than the designated percentage from the offertory, you can place a Matthew 25 envelope with your donation in the basket that week and it will go directly toward that week's charity. The envelopes are available in a basket in the back of church underneath the Blessings Tree. A Map of the world shows both the designated charity for the week and also the one for the following week.

I give to support St. Michael Parish. My desire is not to support other causes with my offertory.

We are grateful for your support of our parish; it provides us with the financial means to live out our mission. Our mission is what we believe Christ calls us to accomplish as a parish community: preaching the Good News, worship, and handing on the faith through our religious education and school. We also believe part of our mission is to share what we have with the poor. We hope you will join us in our mission!

How much has Matthew 25 given to designated charities so far?

From its beginning in February 2013 through November 6, 2017, \$182,710 has been given from the first fruits of our offertory and an additional \$68,840 from direct parishioner contributions for a total of \$251,550 to 135 charities serving the poor within our parish and around the world. Thanks be to God!

Who are the current members of the Matthew 25 Committee?

Larry Doyle	Mike Hull
Pam Schwartz	Gayle Clement
Christine Richardson	Michael Wager
Nancy Martin	Betty Tabor
Mike Mueller-Hayes	Tami Bauer
Fr. James Eisele, Ex-officio	
Teri Marshall, Staff Rep	



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