

Dear Parishioners:

Greetings in the Lord! It has been a true blessing to be here with you over the last months. Thank you for so generously welcoming me to the area and to our parish.

This past Sunday in my homily, I reflected on Jesus' call for us to each 'give to God what belongs to Him' (*Mt 22:21*). Our Lord has not only created us in His image and likeness, but He also gives us everything we have. As Christians we are called to give back to Him and to our neighbor from all that we have been given, in order to be the best stewards of these gifts (cf. *1 Pet 4:10*).

The theme of "Christian Stewardship" has been on my heart since arriving here in July. Christian stewardship is "the grateful response of a Christian disciple, who recognizes and receives God's gifts, and shares these gifts in love of God and neighbor."¹

I am grateful for the many years of generous giving in each of our parishes that have provided us with what we have today. **Our future looks very bright, especially since each of our parishes is each growing.** We see this by looking at our tri-parish religious education program. **Three years ago we had 19 students – today we have 57.** This is wonderful news!

As we grow, our mission likewise expands. While our mission is primarily a spiritual one, we know that it takes money to provide for our parish family, and to protect and preserve the beautiful churches, buildings, and grounds that have been handed on and entrusted to us.

In this letter I do not have space to list all of the needs we have, as I did at each parish on the weekend of October 19, but as we take care of our churches there will always be projects which need accomplished and issues that need addressed. Some are larger and many are smaller, but none of them can be neglected if we are to be the best stewards of what has been entrusted to us.

As we move forward and face a growing mission, **I would like us each to pray about the way we give of our time, talent, and treasure to the Church, and to ask how we might do more.** To do this, I propose that we look at five areas of giving: prayerful, planned, priority, percentage, progressive.²

1. **Prayer:** The way we give must always be rooted in prayerful union with God.
2. **Planned:** As we give, we should strive to give in an organized manner, rather than doing so randomly or inconsistently.
3. **Priority:** In looking at how we use the gifts God gives us, we should strive to put Him first, rather than allowing Him to be an afterthought and only giving to Him out of what is left over.
4. **Percentage:** Christian giving is modeled off of the ancient Jewish method of tithing based on giving 10%. This may sound shocking, but don't be daunted! Many parishes and dioceses encourage their people to give 8% to their home parish, 1% to diocesan charities (e.g., the Annual ADF and Catholic Charities Appeals), and 1% to other suitable charities of their choosing. I would like us to prayerfully move towards implementing this 8-1-1 model, as it allows incredible things to

¹ <http://www.catholicdioceseofwichita.org/stewardship>

² Cf. WHITE, M., CORCORAN, T., Rebuilt: The Story of a Catholic Parish, Ave Maria Press, Notre Dame (2013), p. 182.

happen as a parish's mission flourishes. Throughout our years here together, I will return to this theme. As we move into the future, **I would like to challenge each of you and your families to view your giving on this percentage model, and consider increasing your annual giving by 1%.** The attached chart should help. As we move in this direction, please know that I, myself, am currently tithing to our parishes according to this vision.

Many times moving up one percentage level in our giving can be a rather minor adjustment in our budgeting. For many of us moving up one, two, or even three percentage points may be less than two movie tickets and a light meal afterwards.

5. **Progressive:** We should always strive to give more and even to give sacrificially. This seems to come naturally, as we see all of our gifts as being given to us from God. He will always place on our hearts a desire to be generous to Him and to our neighbor.

Please pray about these five areas of giving and strive to meet this challenge to increase your annual giving by 1% of your income. In prayer our Lord will help us each to become better stewards of the gifts He has given us, and He will help us walk the journey of generosity.

May God bless each of you abundantly.

Sincerely in Christ,

Rev. Cory Stanley, Pastor

Gauge of Our Giving³

Annual Income	Weekly Income	Beyond a Tithe		Upper Range of Giving				Middle Range of Giving			Lower Range of Giving		
		15%	12%	10%	9%	8%	7%	6%	5%	4%	3%	2%	1%
\$22,000	\$423	\$63	\$51	\$42	\$38	\$34	\$30	\$25	\$21	\$17	\$13	\$8	\$4
\$25,000	\$481	\$72	\$58	\$48	\$43	\$38	\$34	\$29	\$24	\$19	\$14	\$10	\$5
\$30,000	\$577	\$87	\$69	\$58	\$52	\$46	\$40	\$35	\$29	\$23	\$17	\$12	\$6
\$40,000	\$769	\$115	\$92	\$77	\$69	\$62	\$54	\$46	\$38	\$31	\$23	\$15	\$8
\$50,000	\$962	\$144	\$115	\$96	\$87	\$77	\$67	\$58	\$48	\$38	\$29	\$19	\$10
\$60,000	\$1,154	\$173	\$138	\$115	\$104	\$92	\$81	\$69	\$58	\$46	\$35	\$23	\$12
\$70,000	\$1,346	\$202	\$162	\$135	\$121	\$108	\$94	\$81	\$67	\$54	\$40	\$27	\$13
\$80,000	\$1,538	\$231	\$185	\$154	\$138	\$123	\$108	\$92	\$77	\$62	\$46	\$31	\$15
\$90,000	\$1,731	\$260	\$208	\$173	\$156	\$138	\$121	\$104	\$87	\$69	\$52	\$35	\$17
\$100,000	\$1,923	\$288	\$231	\$192	\$173	\$154	\$135	\$115	\$96	\$77	\$58	\$38	\$19
\$110,000	\$2,115	\$317	\$254	\$212	\$190	\$169	\$148	\$127	\$106	\$85	\$63	\$42	\$21
\$120,000	\$2,308	\$346	\$277	\$231	\$208	\$185	\$162	\$138	\$115	\$92	\$69	\$46	\$23
\$140,000	\$2,692	\$404	\$323	\$269	\$242	\$215	\$188	\$162	\$135	\$108	\$81	\$54	\$27

³ <http://www.stmarkplano.org/bulletins/20140831.pdf> (see page 7).

