



#### 4) A Prayer of Thanksgiving:

*“Our gifts are most appropriately presented at the Offertory of the Mass. The celebration of Christ’s sacrifice is a fitting context for our own sacrificial offering which is a grateful response to the unfathomable love God has shown for us.”*

Too often, we want to separate the issue of giving, particularly the giving of money, from those more “spiritual” aspects of our faith life. Yet, the commitment to Sacrificial Giving is one of the most important expressions of what our faith means to us. Offering our gifts at Mass places them in an appropriate context of prayer and response to God.

In the offering, we can express our joy in having received and in being able to give. We are able to say, “Thanks be to God!” We can give back some portion of the tremendous gifts that have been given to us, the most important of which we celebrate at the Eucharist. There is no better time, then, to fulfill our commitment to Sacrificial Giving than in the atmosphere of prayer and thanksgiving.

We remember, too, that this commitment is one of personal as well as communal prayer and part of a lifelong process of turning toward God.

*“Each must do as already determined, without sadness or compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.”*

2 Corinthians 9:7

#### 5) A Gift:

*“No gift is truly a gift unless it is given freely without reservation or condition. The gifts of God are given to us in just such an unconditional manner, and we are called to model our giving after God’s.”*

Sacrificial Giving doesn’t buy us anything. It does not buy happiness or love or a tenfold return on our investment. The motive for giving a sacrificial gift is not the expectation of getting something back.

We are able to give what we give because God has already given to us. Sacrificial Giving is really a response, then, to the generosity of God. We acknowledge that we are not the starting point for the giving, but we are simply passing on a portion of what we have received.

The way in which we give our gift is as important as the gift itself. A sacrificial gift has no strings. It is given freely as God has given to us, because the motive for the giving is a grateful response rather than an expected return.

This does not mean that the parish or the charities to which we give are not to be accountable for the gifts given. It does mean that our decision to give is not contingent upon the particular use of the gift.



*“So then, while we have the opportunity, let us do good to all, but especially to those who belong to the family of the faith.” Galatians 6:10*

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## What is Sacrificial Giving?



As good stewards, we plan our Church giving carefully. We prayerfully examine what we are doing for our parish. Is our financial support what it should be? Has it kept pace with our increased income? Are we giving an amount that we feel would be acceptable to God? Is our financial support proportionate to our ability to give?

For Catholics, giving is not an option. God wants us to be faithful and generous in our giving. God demonstrated his love for us by giving us His Son. We, in response, express our gratitude to Him by our willing and generous giving. God is honored, and we begin to excel in the grace of giving when we give the first part of our incomes faithfully, regularly, and generously to him through our church and other Christian ministries.

Sacrificial Giving is based on the individual's need to give, not on the Church's need to receive. For example, a person would give the same amount of money whether their parish was \$200,000 in debt or had \$200,000 saved in the bank, because he or she has a need to give because of their gratitude to God.

May God richly bless you as you faithfully manage all that our Lord has entrusted to you.

In Christ,

Pastor,  
Cathedral of the Holy Spirit

## Five Elements of Sacrificial Giving: Sacrificial Giving Is . . .

### 1) Planned:

*"The decision to give is just that—a decision. It requires thought and time, so that it is integrated with other financial decisions as part of a careful, intentional response to God's generosity."*

The degree of planning that goes into our Sacrificial Giving reflects the importance of our commitment to give. For most of us, unless we plan something, it doesn't happen. Unless we consciously incorporate the amount of our giving into our regular budget, it becomes an optional expense and may be lost in the financial shuffle.

Planning our giving enables us to give of the first fruits rather than some amount left over after "more important" obligations have been satisfied. The planning process itself can be a spiritual exercise, focusing our attention on our values and priorities. Planning can also become an occasion for dialogue among family members about the commitment to give. This dialogue may foster a sense of ownership about the decision to give; in the absence of planning, giving can become a source of tension in the family.



*"Honor the LORD with your wealth, with first fruits of all your produce;" Proverbs 3:9*

*"Much will be required of the person entrusted with much, and still more will be demanded of the person entrusted with more."*  
Luke 12:48

### 2) Proportionate:

*"Our giving should be proportionate to what God has given us. Most people use the biblical concept of the tithe, a tenth, as a guide. In any case, our gift should reflect our level of gratefulness to God."*

How much should you give? Start with an assessment of your level of giving now. Most of us are dismayed to discover how little that is. It is certainly a proportion of your resources but is it a proportion which adequately reflects your gratitude for God's generosity?

There is no magic number that represents the "right" amount. Although we recommend using the biblical tithe as a guideline, (5% of your income to the church, 4% to other charities, and 1% to the God's Share Appeal) the proportion you choose should be sacrificial and proportionate to what God has given you. In many instances, it is a goal we have to work toward, recognizing that it takes time to re-orient our priorities. Your decision about your level of giving will be one which makes sense and truly reflects your gratefulness to God for the gifts you have received.

To help with your calculations, a "Giving Chart" and a "Give Plus One Challenge" worksheet are enclosed. A "Simplified Giving" form is also enclosed if you chose to have funds automatically withdrawn from your account.



*"For the Son of Man did not come to be served but to serve and to give his life as a ransom for many."*  
Mark 10:45

### 3) Sacrificial:



*"Our proportionate gift becomes sacrificial when it comes from our substance rather than our abundance. When we give out of our substance, we are changed in the process. We have given away something we thought we needed for ourselves, thus changing our lifestyle. We have acted on our belief that our security lies not in our material resources but in God."*

Perhaps the most important outcome of Sacrificial Giving is the impact it has on the giver. If you can give your gift and not notice it, it isn't a sacrificial gift. The element of sacrifice is present when something about your life has to change in order for you to be able to give the gift. You re-order your priorities, you reconsider your values. And every time you give the gift, you are reminded of the reasons why you have chosen to give.

Sacrificial Giving is one way we have of walking in the footsteps of our Lord, who sacrificed everything so that we might have life. We give up something of ourselves so that life can flourish. When we give that way we are changed.

When giving becomes Sacrificial Giving, it focuses our attention on the true source of our security. When we give away something we think we need to survive, we are saying "money won't take care of us, possessions won't save us." Sacrificial Giving bears witness to the reality that God alone will make us safe. Recognizing that reality and living it out constitute a tremendous change in our lives.