Have you ever heard of the word “covenant?” It is not only a popular biblical term but also one that defines Catholic marriage. For example, when couples marry they freely enter into a commitment (a covenant) not only with one another but with God as well. It is a commitment that comes from the heart.

The first reading today from the Old Testament book of Samuel gives us an example of a biblical covenant – the covenant between King David and his people. It too is a commitment that comes from the heart: the king promises to rule with justice and the people promise their loyalty to the king.

We entered a covenant relationship with God and his people on the day of our baptism. For infants who are baptized, the commitment comes from the hearts of their parents who want what is best for them. Baptism makes us members of God’s family. Parishes form the basic social structure of God’s family. Today, on this fourth Sunday of the parish message series, I would like to focus on treasure.

There is an old saying, “Money makes the world go-round.” That is true of parishes as well. The parish budget for this fiscal year that began on July 1 is a little over 1.7 million dollars. It predicts that we will be in the “red” by a couple of thousand dollars at the end of June in 2020 though we have always finished in the “black” during my seven years as pastor. So, there is room for optimism! There are materials available on tables in the gathering area providing information on the various ways that we can share our treasure with the parish.

Our costs for running the parish go up every year as do the costs for running your household or business. More than half of the budget goes to financing our Catholic schools and
to the salaries and benefits of our parish staff. We are still paying off the loan for this church building.

The gospel reading today gives us the stark story of Jesus’ death on the cross. He was not alone on Calvary – two criminals were crucified along with him. All three of them had been accused and found guilty of capital crimes that merited the death penalty.

St. John tells us in his gospel (3:16) that “God so loved the world that he gave us his only Son that whoever believes in him may have eternal life.” God gave all that he had by dying on the cross. We believe in a GENEROUS God. How GENEROUS are we?

God’s generosity is a model for our generosity. Hence, sharing our treasure is not so much about an obligation or duty but rather it is about the heart, about our relationship with God. When the scriptures speak about what we should give back to the Lord for his generosity to us they use the word “tithe.” Today a “tithe” is understood as giving 5% of our gross income to our parish and another 5% to other charities. Do you give a percentage of your income to the parish rather than just a certain amount of money? I give about 4 to 5%.

We now will hear from a family in the parish who have responded to God’s call.