

PASTOR'S COLUMN

Teething, Tithing and Joyful, Sacrificial Giving

As a priest celebrated Mass, he noticed a man, woman and baby in the front pew of church. The man and baby cried throughout Mass. When Mass ended, the priest asked the woman, "Why was your baby crying throughout Mass?" "Teething," she replied. "Oh," the priest responded. Turning to the man, he asked, "Why were you crying throughout Mass?" "Tithing," he answered. (That's a joke; I hope you laughed.)

"Tithing" is donating a tenth of one's income to the work of the Church. Tithing was a requirement of Jews in ancient Israel and still is a requirement for membership in some Christian Churches today. Tithing is not a requirement in the Catholic Church. However, Catholics are called to support the work of the Church through financial giving: "*The Christian faithful are obliged to assist with the needs of the Church for divine worship, apostolic works, works of charity and decent sustenance of ministers. They are obliged to promote social justice and assist the poor from their resources.*" (Canon Law, Para. 222)

Financial giving is part of being a faithful Catholic, but the Catholic Church doesn't specify an amount or percentage for financial giving. Rather, the Church holds up certain principles to guide us in our financial giving, including (1) ***Money is a gift from God*** ["The Lord makes poor and makes rich" (1 Sam. 2:7)]; (2) ***God expects charitable giving*** ["I was hungry and you gave me food" (Mt. 25:35)]; (3) ***God expects generosity and joy in giving*** ["Whoever sows bountifully will reap bountifully, for God loves a cheerful giver." (2 Cor. 9:6,7)]; (4) ***God expects sacrifice in giving*** [Jesus praised the poor widow who gave from her poverty and not her surplus (Lk 21:1- 4)]; (5) ***God will require an accounting of our stewardship in the end*** ["Well done, my good and faithful servant" (Mt. 25:23, Parable of the Talents)].

Summing it up, our faith teaches that everything we have, including our money, is a gift from God. God expects us to be intentional, generous, joyful and sacrificial in using our treasure to support the work of the Church and the needs of the poor.

St. Francis Parish could not survive without the consistent, generous, sacrificial giving of our parishioners. Thanks to all who donate to the work and upkeep of our Parish on a regular basis – please consider if you can increase your financial giving at this time. If you are not a regular financial contributor to our parish, please consider becoming one through weekly envelope usage or Faith Direct. And remember: God is never outdone in generosity (Mt. 19:27-30).

God bless,
Fr. Joe