



Sacrificial and Proportional Giving

October 2006

We once again approach the time of year when all of us are invited to reflect on the gifts of our time, talent and money that the Lord calls us to share with our parish community. The Stewardship Committee asks you to reflect on the principles of our Catholic faith that are at the foundation of the Stewardship process.

God generously and freely gives us all the gifts of creation. Our lives, our resources, our time, our money, and yes, every breath we take come to us from the love and care of our God. In turn, God asks us to use these gifts responsibly for the building of God's Kingdom.

As people of faith, we take these responsibilities very seriously. Our most natural tendencies are to think not just of ourselves, but of others. We share our gifts and resources with family and friends. We see brokenness and pain in our world and reach out with our resources to total strangers. We willingly sacrifice our own needs to make sure that those we love have what they need (our time, our talent and our money) to live fruitful and faith-filled lives.

Stewardship invites us to put our "natural tendencies" into practice. This means living as God created us to live. We nurture our natural tendencies, first and foremost, by putting them into practice in our faith community. We enjoy an abundance of grace and blessings in our life here at St. Gabriel's. When we celebrate the Eucharist each week, we are empowered to make the needs of others central to our own lives.

Stewardship calls us to Sacrificial Giving. It is a way of living that recognizes all we have is entrusted to us by God. Rooted in the scriptures, this lifestyle, through Proportional Giving, willingly sets aside a substantial portion of our worldly treasures and puts them at the service of the Church and its mission to those in need. As you prepare for Commitment Sunday, we ask you to incorporate the following four principles of Sacrificial and Proportional Giving into the decisions you will be making:

GIFT: No gift is truly a gift unless given freely without reservation or condition. God's gifts are given to us in just such an unconditional manner. We are all called to model our giving after the way God gives. Our giving expresses our trust in God who always provides for us and in a community that will use our gifts to build God's Kingdom.

PLANNED: The decision to give is just that, a decision. It requires our thought and time so that it becomes integrated with our other financial decisions as part of a careful and intentional response to God's generosity in our life.

PROPORTIONATE: The gospel calls us to give the "first fruits" of our resources as an expression of our faith. The giving of our first fruits are proportionate to what God has given us. Responsible stewards decide what portion of their money they will give to the church, and allow this gift to be a reflection of the importance that faith has in their lives.

SACRIFICIAL: The portion we give 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 ourselves. Our lifestyle changes, for we have acted on the belief that our security lies not in our material resources, but in God.

Be assured that a decision to practice Sacrificial and Proportional Giving at St Gabriel's WILL fill you with joy and help you grow spiritually. Your faith WILL be deepened. Trust the gospel promise that as you give from your substance, God WILL take care of your needs!

Financial Commitments

As you consider the financial commitment you make to St. Gabriel's, take seriously the call to become a "sacrificial and proportional giver". Use the materials in the Stewardship Packet to assist you in determining a financial donation that truly reflects your faith and your commitment to our parish community.