



Pastor's Column

St. Peter Catholic Church

September 23, 2018, Twenty-Fifth Sunday in Ordinary Time

Stewardship: Tithing Tips

Tithing is the practice, established by God in the Old Testament, of returning 10% of your blessings to God. The most important thing to understand about tithing is that, for the believer, the tithe is really what was owed to God. The tithe was not given based on the needs of the priests, of the Church, or of the poor. It was given simply in recognition and gratitude for the blessings that God had bestowed on the individual. Thus, every believer had a need to tithe to God. We do not so much give to need as recognize our need to give.

Tithing is absolutely necessary in the Catholic Church today. When the Lord introduced the concept of the tithe in the Old Testament, He told the Israelites that this contribution was necessary from them to support the work of the Levites and the poor in the community. Today, the Church still needs our support to pay the expenses and financial obligations that it incurs as it operates in a commercial society. Salaries, benefits, insurance, maintenance, utilities and service fees are all expenses that never even existed when the Lord first decreed that each of us was to give back a percentage of what we have. Additionally, we are still called to care for the poor among us.

Sacred Scripture teaches us that everything belongs to God and that we are to give back to God. God made the world and all that is in it; God made us and blessed us with absolutely every gift we have. Our lives, our families, our health, our education, our unique talents and skills, our jobs, and our income – they are all blessings from God, entrusted to our care for the good of all people. Thus, when we tithe, we are simply giving back 10% of something that ultimately belongs to God anyway. The amazing thing is that the Lord is a generous and abundant God who lets us keep and enjoy 90% of all His blessings!

With all of this in mind, the most important tip for tithing is to *plan*. If we can bother ourselves to plan a family budget and thus set aside a certain amount of money each month for certain necessary expenses, we ought to plan and budget similarly for our tithing. Perhaps 10% tithing is too much of a stretch at first; start small, therefore, and then let it grow. Whatever is your planned gift to give back to the Lord and His Church, a good rule of thumb is to give half of that gift to the parish and the other half to other charities and causes. Again, always keeping in mind that *how much* we give is not as important as *that* we give. And budgeting our planned gift is the most important tip for tithing that I can suggest to you.

- Fr. Lewis