

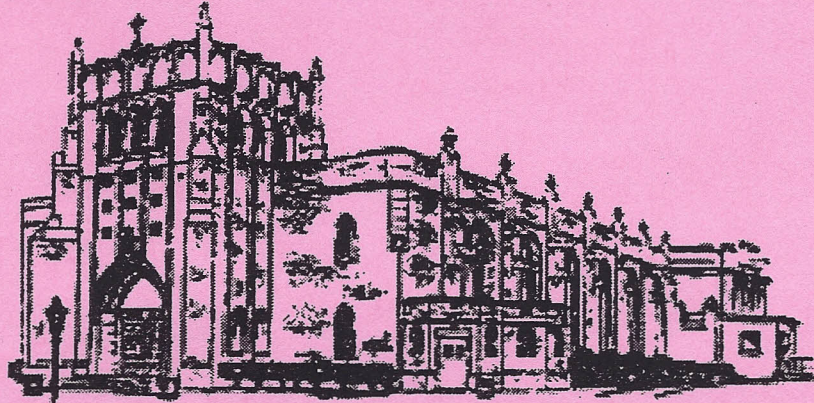
# Curé of Ars

## Roman Catholic Church

2323 Merrick Avenue, Merrick, NY 11566

Telephone (516) 623-1400 Fax (516) 623-1107

[www.cureofarschurch.net](http://www.cureofarschurch.net)



## “GOD’S PLAN FOR GIVING”

### I

**FROM THE PASTOR...** I would like to take a moment to thank our witnesses speakers today, Mary Ward and Joe Seeber for taking time from their families to share their personal experiences with us.

As we take a look at our parish mission statement in our weekly bulletin, there is a line that says, “*We are committed to the Spirit of Stewardship - sharing our time, talent and treasure as witnesses of Jesus’ presence in the world.*” As a parish we thrive with the time and talent of hundreds of volunteers in our ministries but with the treasure we have struggled. Therefore, after consultation with the Finance Committee and Pastoral Council we felt we needed a direction in dealing with our financial struggles whose answer is found in the gospel, in the scriptures and is consistent with our parish mission statement.

After prayer and looking into other parishes, we believe tithing is that scripture based spiritual answer because tithing has to do with ones relationship and trust in the Lord. It is God’s plan for giving. I can only share that since I have been tithing (*started 20 years ago*) my trust in and love for the Lord has increased as I have made Him Lord of everything, even my finances. But, when the Lord first laid it upon my heart to tithe I was afraid I wouldn’t have enough money to take care of myself. Plus, I need money for my retirement, etc. God was asking me to trust Him, to give back to Him what is rightly His anyway. In my prayer He reassured me if I took this step He would provide for me and not to be fearful, to trust and I have been amazed how He has taken care of me.

**TITHING IN THE BIBLE...** Tithing is mentioned more than 40 times in scripture. Numerous Old Testament stories recount how God asked that the first ten percent of the land’s produce be set aside as a sign of gratitude for His goodness. God wanted the people to enjoy 90% of the produce, he was asking only for the first 10% (*to be used to feed the hungry*). The early Church had no tithing system, but as it grew, so did its material needs. Gradually, the Old Testament model of tithing was adopted by the early Church.

**AND TODAY...** In our time, the difficulty of fulfilling the mission and addressing the growing needs of the Church is due to the fact that we have a voluntary system of giving. Therefore, I am asking you to join me as we return to our roots of a scriptural based faith-giving. In fact, since 1977, more than 1000 Catholic parishes have become tithing parishes.

**WHAT IS A TITHE?** The word tithe means tenth. A tithe is the first tenth of a person's income before taxes (gross income). Everything I earn is God's gift to me. Sometimes we don't see it that way, we work hard for our money and when we get paid we can often see it as, OUR MONEY and not God's. It's God money for He gave me the job and the health to work. Life is all a gift. Tithing is giving back to God something God gave in the first place. Tithing is not any tenth; it's the first tenth of one's income (whether that income is salary, dividends, interest or from any other source).

In fact we see it in the gospel today, Jesus tells a story about a Pharisee who is acknowledging in prayer to God that he fasts twice a week and that he is tithing his whole income (Luke 18:9-14). The Pharisee is doing the right thing but with the wrong attitude. The spirit of tithing is one of humility and gratitude before God and charity toward others. The Pharisee is missing this point completely.

**HOW DOES TITHING WORK?** As said earlier, it's 10% of one's income. Five percent is given to God through the parish church. The other 5% can be used for private charities, care of one's parents, special diocesan collections, the Catholic Ministries Appeal, Catholic school tuition, etc. The most important part of this way of giving is the spirit of Tithing which means giving to God, not to me, your pastor, or to this church. Giving to the parish is giving to God. Tithing means giving to a point of sacrifice for the word sacrifice means "to make holy." We make holy our money when giving back to God what belongs to Him. The spirit of tithing means not caring what anyone else gives; it's spiritual giving in every sense. What you give to God is between you and God. The ideal tithe is giving 5% to God's Church and another 5% to His other works.

On a personal level, by tithing, I have also been able to help God take care of His people. 5% of my salary goes to the parish every month and I have been giving the other 5% to various charities such as the adoption of a young boy in Mexico, paying for his education through CFCA. But, for the last six months the money has been collecting in my tithing account and I have been asking the Lord in prayer what He wants me to do with it. For months I have not received a word from Him until recently when a particular family was in a crisis situation I heard the Lord say to my heart, "That's where I want you to use the money". The Lord had me wait 6 months for the money to accumulate so the amount the family needed is what I was able to save in that time. So regarding how to tithe let's look at the following example which could be of help to you.

If your income from all sources before taxes is \$300 per week, the 10% tithe is \$30.00. The Sunday Mass offering would be half of that \$15.00 (or 5%). You might give the other 5% (the other \$15.00) to private charities, diocesan collections, etc. Tithing is really very logical. Everything we have comes from God, and when we give back the first 10% of our earnings, which is the scriptural way of giving, we're saying to Him, "Thank You, God, for letting me use the other 90%!". There is a real surrender and peace that comes from tithing which changes your life.

As a result of this spiritual way of giving, we will be doing away with one of our monthly collections: the building maintenance collection. Therefore, the sacrificial gift you presently give in the monthly building/maintenance collection should now be included in your regular weekly collection. For example, if you give \$10.00 in the regular weekly collection each week and give \$5.00 in the monthly building/maintenance collection, we would suggest that you would now put them together (*actually, as a result of tithing you may be adding more to this total amount*). To drop this monthly second collection is a risk but by becoming a tithing parish one collection at the offertory will more than make up for dropping the monthly building/maintenance collection. We will continue to take up the Parish Social Ministry (Outreach) collection once a month since that money goes directly to the needs of Parish Social Ministry. The other second collections throughout the year will consist of the 13 diocesan mandated for 2011, such as Respect Life, Priest Retirement, Catholic Relief Services, etc. and the All Souls day, Mother's day and Father's day novenas.

**WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS TO THE TITHER AND TO THE PARISH?** Every parish that has adopted this method has improved its spiritual and material status. It means one collection for the parish at the Offertory of the Mass with the true spirit of offering oneself with the offering of Christ. And for the individual, tithing tells us what God expects. Most important for the tither, however, is the spiritual effect. Tithing helps establish a proper sense of values. It helps us to remember that God comes before all else and that everything we have comes from Him.

**WHAT DO WE DO NOW?** Nothing. No one will ever call on you; you will never be asked to sign anything. Just come again next week and listen to the rest of "God's Plan." In the meantime, seek God's will through earnest prayer. I pray that you will be open as we look at God's plan for giving. And when you pray, please remember that the true purpose of tithing is to secure not the tithe, but the tither; not the gift, but the giver; not your money, but you – for God.