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St. Mark Church, Bristol, PA

My name is Joe Seeber and I'm visiting you from St. Mark Catholic Church in Bristol, PA.

My family's journey with tithing began in 1978 when my wife, Sue, and I, with our five children, moved from suburban Philadelphia to a small farm town in central Indiana. And after Sunday Mass we registered, and learned that Our Lady of Mount Carmel was a tithing parish. Now I didn't know anything about tithing so maybe you can understand my reaction when I read about it.

This is impossible...

"Tithing is God's plan for giving and is mentioned over forty times in the Bible. Literally, tithing means 'a tenth' or 'ten per cent, and is . . .'" "Yikes! Sue, wait until you read this! These people must live in another world. They're crazy! They're asking for ten percent of my salary; before taxes, yet! We can never do this. . . This is impossible!" And there was something else going on, too. Inside, I was upset and a little bit angry. "Who are these people. . . telling me what to do with my money? Doesn't my money belong to me?" That was to be the end of tithing in my family. But it didn't work out that way. Why?

Giant Leap in Faith...

First came God's grace. Like water on a stone over time, it changed our hearts. Next came our new parish community. As Sue and I went to Mass week after week, month after month, our eyes were opened and we saw a group of adult Roman

Catholics together in community striving for holiness. We came to see tithing as a visible sign of their commitment to *time* together in prayer; using their *talents* in the service of others, and to the self-sacrifice of their *treasure*. They were teaching us that tithing was about giving, not keeping; about sharing, not accumulating; it's about being generous, not selfish. Sue and I knew we needed these virtues in our lives and in the lives of our children; we made our family's "Giant Leap in Faith" and began our tithing journey.

God took care of us...

A lot of water has gone under the bridge since then, and now when we examine that journey we see that our weekly tithe has become for us a constant reminder that God, Our Father, has been loving, caring, and providing for us during all those years – even when we were off the path and "lost in the desert". So today when life gets scary, when we worry and are anxious about tomorrow, tithing reminds us to stop, turn around, and look back over our journey, and remember that the same God Who took care of us yesterday will take care of us tomorrow.

Your turn...

And now it's your turn! What are you going to do? Will you dismiss this invitation as I at first did? My prayer is that you will realize that tithing will help you in your journey toward Him just as it is helping Sue and me.

Thank you for your attention!