

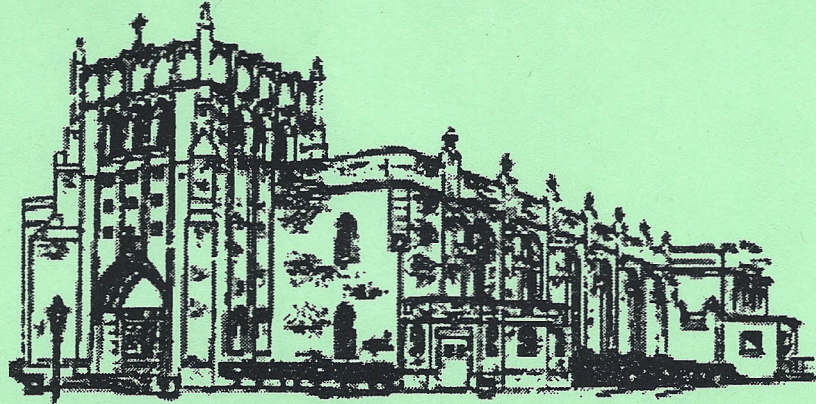
Curé of Ars

Roman Catholic Church

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“GOD’S PLAN FOR GIVING” II

From the Pastor

This is the second and last weekend of our Tithing presentation which leads one to inner surrender and freedom. We have with us this weekend two additional witnesses giving testimony: Anne Marie Dimalanta from Our Lady Queen of Martyrs Parish in Forest Hills and Marilu Lerma from St. Teresa’s in Woodside, New York. Please welcome Anne Marie and Marilu.

I am indeed grateful to Mary Ward and Joe Seeber for sharing their most inspiring experiences with us last week. Today we express our thanks to Anne Marie and Marilu for their thoughtful, stimulating and encouraging testimonies. This is their ministry to the Church; they are not paid for being here this weekend. They will be in the front lobby of the church after Mass to answer any questions you may have.

Next Sunday, Curé of Ars Parish will adopt tithing - what one might call “God’s Plan for Giving” - as a parish way of life. During this past week, I hope that all of you have been praying to determine God’s will for you in this matter.

As we explained last week. . . tithing is “God’s Plan.” Mentioned over 40 times in Scripture, it’s giving the first tenth of one’s earnings to God. It’s giving to God, not to the priests of the Church. In the book of Malachi (3:10) God says, “Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse that there may be food in my house and try me in this, says the Lord of Hosts. Shall I not open for you the floodgates of Heaven and pour down blessings upon you without measure?”

Tithing is budgeting God first. It’s not caring what anyone else gives; it’s knowing that what you give is between you and God. If after prayer, you’re finding yourself frightened to take this leap of faith in tithing the biblical 10%, please ask yourself then what is truly possible for me? I pray that your commitment will be a realistic and conscientious one guided by prayer.

The ideal tithe... of giving 5% to God's Church and 5% to His other needs may be best explained by an example. If your income from all sources - before taxes - is \$300.00 per week, the 5% Sunday Mass offering would be \$15.00. The other 5% might be divided by you among your personal charities, school tuition, a diocesan collection, etc.

For those of you who would be interested in electronic giving, we have Faith Direct, so I invite you to please see the bulletin flyer for details or the yellow flyers at the doors of the church.

Many of you may already be tithing, and perhaps others are very close to it. Adopting tithing as a parish way of life will enable our faith community to better meet our ministerial and financial needs.

More important than this material consideration, however, are the spiritual blessings that will come to those who tithe, and to our parish because of those who tithe.

Tithing produces a spiritual transformation in the person tithing, since he or she is acknowledging that everything he has comes from God. It's putting God first in our lives. It is, in effect, saying "Thank You, God for all the blessings You've given me."

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 donation. 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.

As a result of us becoming a tithing parish, the parish will also be **tithing the tithe**. This means that we will be tithing 10% of our weekly income and giving it to charity on a weekly basis. We would like to do something locally and globally. Locally, giving money to the Inn in Freeport which feeds the poor and homeless and globally, continuing to build houses for the poor in India and educate the children. We are also open to suggestions you may have for charities the parish could support. Feel free to write them down and drop it off at the rectory to my attention.

Yes, you've heard much...about this beautiful way of living and giving today and last week, and now you may ask, "What happens next?" Much will happen should you choose to tithe. It's your choice, your option. You will not be asked to sign anything. No one will call on you. There are no meetings or pledges. You are totally free to choose. Remember, God said, "Try Me in this." You will find that God will not be outdone in generosity!

Although I have personally been doing the biblical tithe of 10% for many years now, and give the parish half of that each week, I humbly ask each one of you to join me in this beautiful act of faith and love in God as we officially become a tithing parish next weekend. 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 through the years. Thank you and God bless you.