

How Can I Possibly Give More?

Even when we decide we want to become more generous, it is not easy for us in this world of endless expenses and temptations. These steps might help.

- 1 Begin by asking God to guide you in your giving decisions.
- 2 Consciously plan how you will give more. Set a realistic amount to give, stretching a little beyond your current giving level.
- 3 Give to God first every week or every month. If we want to give God what is left, nothing will be left. God deserves more than our leftovers.
- 4 Discuss your desire to give more with your family. Work together to find ways to sacrifice for God.
- 5 Look carefully at unnecessary or underutilized monthly expenses. Can you give your gym membership, an excessive cable bill, a dinner out, or other little luxuries to God?

“All of us today must think about how we can become a little poorer.” — Pope Francis, June 7, 2013, in a message to schoolchildren

What Will Be My Reward?

Although sacrificial giving means we deny ourselves some of the things of this world, the rewards are great. People who give generously find they have more joy in giving than they have ever known in acquiring more things for themselves. When we give generously we are filled with a contentment that comes from knowing we have done the best we can with what God has entrusted to us. We feel a greater connection to Our Lord, who is always generous, and to our community. The rewards for generous giving are many and often surprising.

“Give and gifts will be given to you; a good measure, packed together, shaken down, and overflowing, will be poured into your lap. For the measure with which you measure will in return be measured out to you.” — Luke 6:38



A Prayer for Generosity

Lord, I want to be a more generous person.

I am sorry for the times I have held your gifts in a clenched fist.

I am sorry for the times I was blinded by what I wanted and failed to be grateful for the abundant blessings you had already poured into my lap.

Please show me how to be a more grateful and generous person.

Help me to see how my gifts can make a difference in my parish and my community.

Let me use my financial blessings in a way that is sacred and holy.

Give me the strength to turn away from the temptation of too many material possessions.

May I share the gifts you entrusted to me in exactly the way you had hoped I would.

And may I know the deep joy that comes from holy and sacrificial giving.

Amen

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SACRED GIVING

in a World of Plenty



“Consider this: Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly and whoever sows bountifully will also reap bountifully ... for God loves a cheerful giver.”

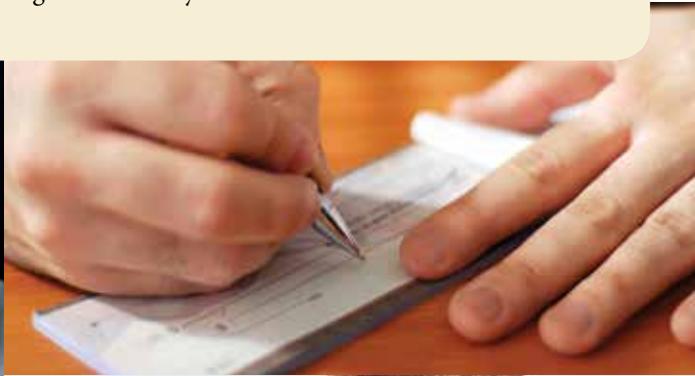
2 CORINTHIANS 9:6, 8

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Did you Know?

Sacrifice Means “to Make Holy”

We often think of sacrifice in negative and painful ways. But sacrifice is a beautiful thing. It comes from two Latin words: *sacer*, meaning “holy,” and *facere*, meaning “to make.” When we sacrifice we make some part of our lives holy. Our work is made holier when we give a generous first share of our salary to God. Our daily routines are made holier when we sacrifice some indulgence and instead give the money to do God’s work here on earth.



Images: Shutterstock.com

Throughout sacred Scripture God calls us to be **generous givers**. Yet, giving seems so difficult in our present age of plenty. Abundant new products continually tempt us. Along with basic needs, our money can buy us fun gadgets, beautiful homes, amazing experiences, secure investments, and so much more. Why would we want to give it away? The problem may be in the way we look at giving.

Do I See Giving as a Burden?

“Give until it hurts.” This is a phrase we often hear when we are being asked to give. However, giving shouldn’t hurt. It should feel gratifying and fulfilling. We should feel honored to use our financial resources to do good for others. Instead, our materialistic world has deceived us. It has made us believe we need so many unnecessary luxuries. We feel entitled to these luxuries because we have worked hard for our money. We forget that everything we have — our education, talents, strengths, opportunities, family, job — are all gifts from God. God entrusted us to use these gifts for the world. It hurts when we tightly clutch them to ourselves, thinking they are for our benefit alone.

“Do not let your hand be open to receive, but clenched when it is time to give.” — Sirach 4:31

Am I Grateful Enough?

Our culture today is typically not very grateful. We often find ourselves looking at the person who has more and wishing we could have all they have. This makes it harder for us to be generous. We concentrate on what we want instead of on what we already have. If we would compare ourselves to the poor of the world instead of the rich of the world, we would quickly realize how abundantly God has blessed us. God has given us all we need, plus enough to share. The best way to thank him for his generosity is to be generous to others. Let us not be like the lepers who saddened Jesus by failing to thank him.

“Ten were cleansed, were they not? Where are the other nine? Has none but this foreigner returned to give thanks to God?” — Luke 17:17-18



Did you Know?

The More We Have the Less We Give

Research has continually shown that on average the higher our income the smaller percentage of that income we give away. In other words, Our Lord’s statement that the poor widow gave more is still true today. There are two possible reasons for this:

1

We make our giving decisions when we are young. Many of us decide our giving levels when we are just starting out in our adult lives. This amount may even be based on what we remember our parents once giving years ago. As our salaries grow, we forget to give away an increased amount of the blessings God has showered upon us.

2

The more we receive the more we want. As we are able to afford bigger homes and nicer things in life our expectations increase. We begin to feel we need or deserve commodities we would have once seen as luxuries. Thus, we fill more of our own wants before we give more to support the needs of Church and others.

Why Do I Need to Give?

We might think just saying thanks to God is good enough. But Jesus taught us differently. We are called to show our gratitude through our actions. Even the poor widow understood the importance of giving despite her circumstances. As Jesus watched her place her last two coins in the temple basket, he praised her generosity. He did not tell her to keep the money and let someone else do her share. What is Christ calling us to share as we place our offering in the collection basket? Would he praise our giving? Would he say it was a worthy sacrifice?

“Much will be required of the person entrusted with much, and still more will be demanded of the person entrusted with more.” — Luke 12:48



Photo by Kevin Kitt

Why Does My Parish Need My Gift?

We might excuse ourselves from giving generously if we question our parish’s need for our contributions. But just balancing the budget should not be the only goal for any parish. The parish community is called to be the hands and feet of Jesus in this world. Thus, there is no end to the good work a parish can do if enough resources are brought to its altar. No matter how rich or poor a parish may be, it has a responsibility to help feed the hungry and give drink to the thirsty.

“At our door people are starving and Jesus does not tire of saying to us, ‘Give them something to eat’ [Mark 6:37].” — Pope Francis, The Joy of the Gospel, 49