

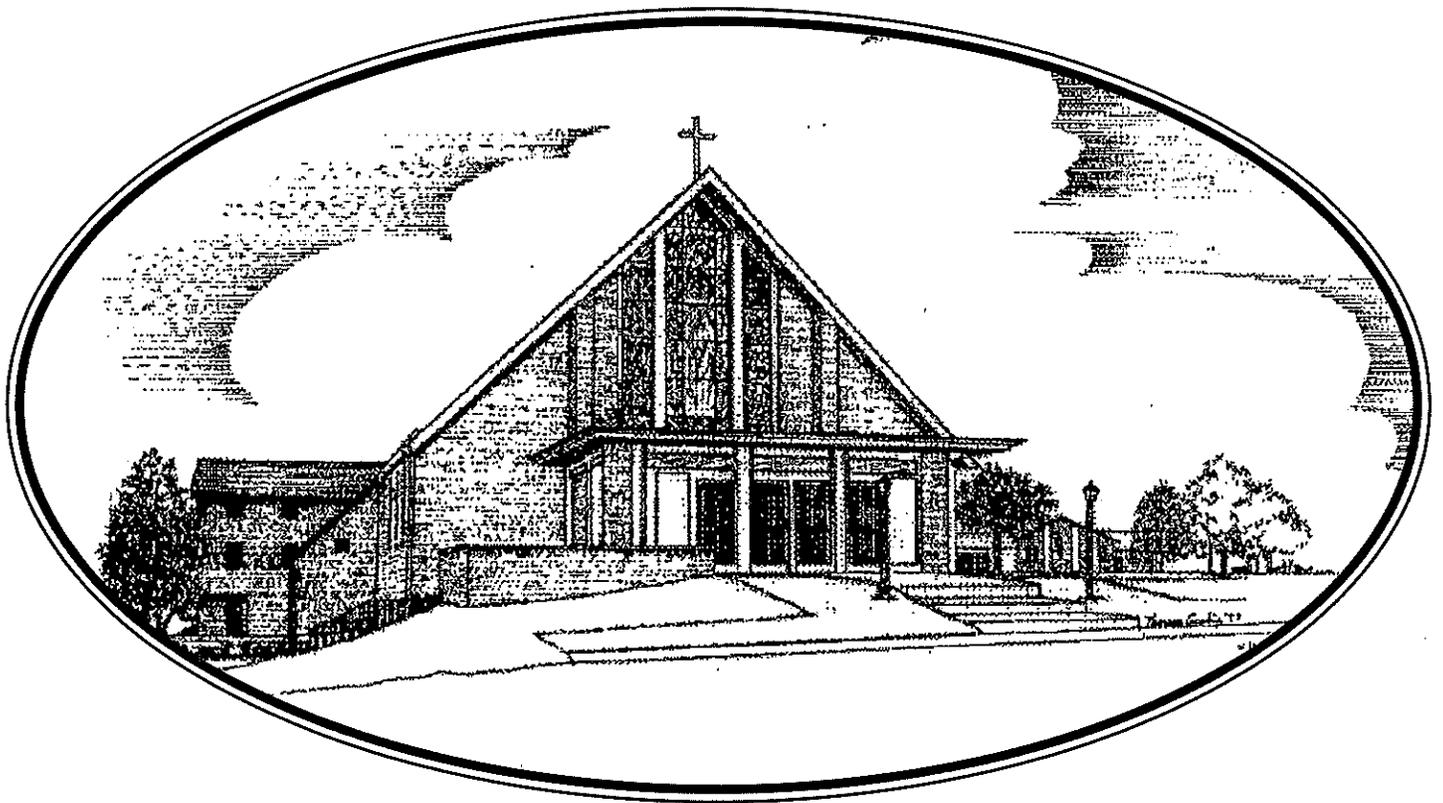
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“GOD’S PLAN FOR GIVING”

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Fr. John Gallagher, OFM Cap.
Pastor - St. Pius X, Middletown, CT

From The Pastor... I am indeed grateful to Lisa Rohrer and Joe Seeber for sharing their most inspiring experiences with us last week. Today we express our thanks to Frank and Mary Donegan for their thoughtful, stimulating, and encouraging comments. This is their ministry to the Church; they are not paid for being here this weekend. They will be in the rear of the church after Mass to answer any questions.

Next Sunday, St. Pius X will adopt tithing-what one might call "God's Plan for Giving"-as a parish way of life. During the last 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 forty times in Scripture, it's giving the first tenth of one's earnings to God. It's giving to God, not to the priests or 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. For senior citizens on limited incomes or parents with heavy parochial tuition bills, the percentage may differ, but we hope that the commitment will be made, and that it will be a realistic and conscientious one. One that trusts in God.

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 per week, the 5% Sunday Mass offering would be \$15. The other 5% might be divided by you among school tuition, a Diocesan collection, or any other charity you choose to support.

Many of our parishioners may already be tithing, and perhaps others are very close to it. Adopting tithing as

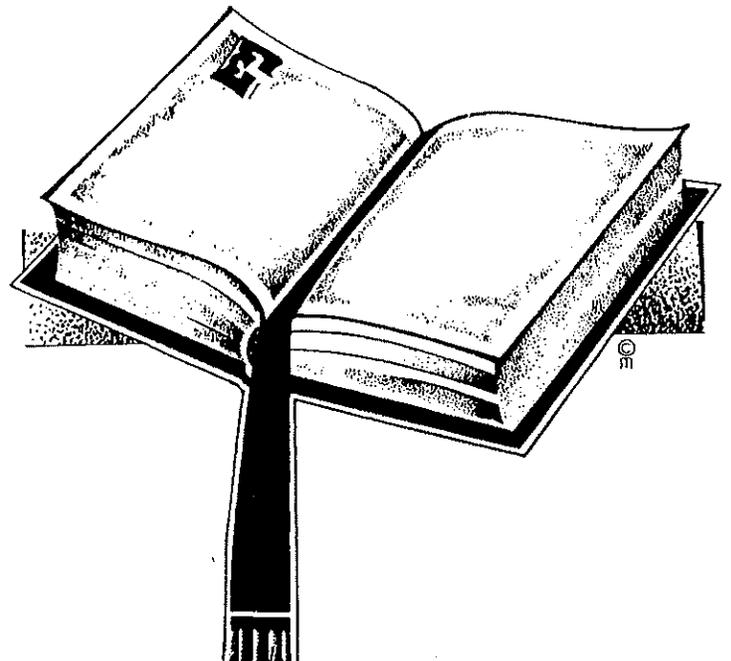
a parish way of life will enable our faith community to meet its financial obligations.

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."

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. Remember, God said, "Try me in this." You will find that God will not be outdone in generosity!

I, your pastor, will begin tithing with the parish next Sunday. I humbly ask each one of you to join me in this beautiful act of faith and love of God.



Francis P. Donegan, Jr.
St. Madeline Parish, Ridley Park, PA

My name is Frank Donegan.

I recently married a single mother with eight (8) children that I have known for twenty five (25) years and now I am the father and step father to seventeen (17) children.

Let's Talk About Tithing...

A while back in an effort to get closer to the Lord, I was encouraged to tithe. I was surprised. I didn't associate tithing with the Catholic Church. Mormons and some Protestants practiced tithing but I never heard about it. Moreover, I didn't know how I could get closer to the Lord by tithing. I didn't understand tithing and its benefits.

Eleanor and I had been raised with the understanding that everything we had came from God and practiced giving something back, it seemed appropriate to take up the gift of tithing. But it didn't become a permanent part of our lives and we drifted from the practice. Occasionally we would reflect on this time in our life and several points became clear to us.

Our life was less financially stressful during this time. Whenever we received a surprise bill, there always seemed to be money to pay it. God working in our life and the lives of our family in ways we could not imagine. God was providing for our needs before we could even put the needs into words.

Let's Fast Forward...

In the mid-nineties, the Mc Kenna Group came into our parish the same way we are visiting you today. I don't remember the details of the talks; however, one thought came through. Whatever decision we were to make; would be between us and God. I learned a long

time ago that if you were going to have a partner or a relationship, you better be able to trust the other party, and who could I trust more than God?

I mentioned earlier how the Lord blessed our family. Can I promise the same gifts for you if you practice tithing? ABSOLUTELY not, but I can promise you unequivocally if you put your trust in God you will not be disappointed. God loves us unconditionally; He knows our needs and will provide for us.

He Only asks Us To Trust...

Recently, one of our sons came to me and said, "Hey dad, what's the lowdown on tithing, give me your scoop. They're talking about putting in tithing in our parish. If I give what they are asking for how will I get my money back?" I said, "Whoa, timeout. There is absolutely no business formula nor logical explanation I can give to explain how you will be rewarded. But it's not about reward, it's about trust.

All through the scriptures God asks us to trust. He doesn't ask us to understand. He only asks us to trust and whenever we say yes to God, good things happen. I feel confident

the Blessed Mother didn't understand all the angel was asking but she said yes and good things happened. If we put our trust in God, we will not be disappointed. God will not be outdone in generosity.

Two Final Thoughts...

Let me leave you with two thoughts. **One**, before you do anything, pray. Ask the Lord to give you the wisdom, direction, guidance, discernment, and knowledge about the gift of tithing and **how** it affects your family. And second, be aware that whatever decision you **reach**, it **will be between you and God**.



Mary Donegan
St. Madeline, Ridley Park, PA

My name is Mary Donegan. I am a member of St. Madeline's Parish in Ridley Park, PA. I have been asked to share a few thoughts about tithing.

It saved their Church...

I was first introduced to tithing by my daughter, a member of a mission church in a small town in Colorado. The parishioners of that church had been advised by the diocese that they could no longer afford to support them. That is when tithing came into the picture and it saved their church.

When the idea of tithing was first introduced at St. Madeline's, my first thought was, I can't do that, I am a widow. **I'm still paying tuition, I have to get medical insurance, and on and on.** But then I remembered how the little mission church was saved and I also recalled the words of Anne Frank, a 14-year-old Jewish girl who was put to death by the Nazis. She said, "No one has ever become poor by giving."

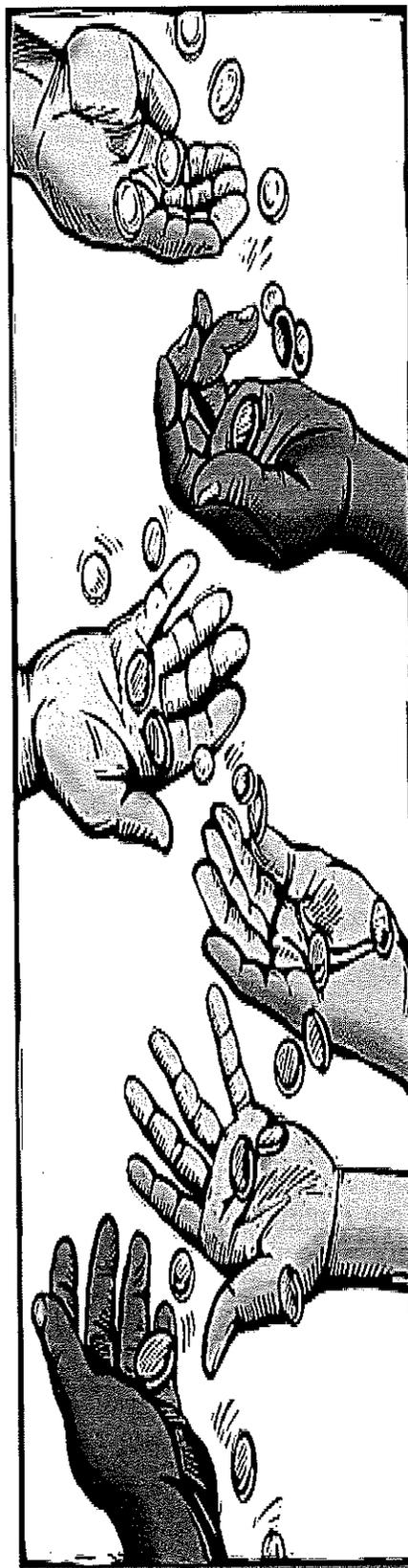
Did I make the right decision...

So after considerable prayer and thought, I decided it was time for me to put my faith into action. My parish needed my help, so I would try to contribute a little more money, and just maybe, a little more time. Did I make the right decision? You bet!

Trust in God's unconditional love...

Like you, I have bills to pay. I realize the costs and problems of raising a family; I raised 8 children. I know the hardships of unexpected expenses, the loss of a job and extended illness. I have experienced some great joys and some almost unbearable heart aches. But, through it all, I have received tremendous blessings, the love and support of my parish family through some very rough times, a deeper spirituality and my trust in God's unconditional love which gives me a great sense of peace.

So, as you consider tithing, I urge you to remember **"no one has ever become poor by giving."**



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Luke 6:38