



# Not Equal Gifts But Equal Sacrifice

The simple and profound theme that underscores *A Walk in Faith* comes from the Scriptures' teaching about **proportionate giving** and the blessings of **sacrifice**. No gift impresses God in terms of dollar amounts, but rather the love and obedience with which they are given in **proportion** to the resources you've been given. God, in other words, looks at your heart.

Good stewardship is discipleship and begins in conversion, re-prioritization, a change of mind and heart. This commitment is expressed not in a single action, nor even in a number of actions over a period of time, but in an entire way of life. It means committing our self to the Lord.

Discipleship requires the surrender of ourselves. We regard all we are and possess as gifts and blessings and realize the need to share those gifts and blessings with others for the sake of the kingdom of God. For some of us, it may mean eliminating some current expenditures to increase giving. Others will delay a major expenditure. Some people will find ways to increase their income in order to give to *A Walk in Faith*. Some will give special gifts out of their assets, such as stocks, bonds, valuables, etc.

Remember that your experience with authentic discipleship is not a one-time check or contribution, but a profound way to explore and deepen the gift of giving based upon how God has blessed you. How you respond stands not only to change your daily life, but the lives of many people who will come to this parish years from now. Should you give up something in order to give? Remember, you are sacrificing belongings that will one day be useless, forgotten dust, for something that lasts forever.



*"Seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well."* Matthew 6:33

## "A FAMILY'S JOURNEY"

Tom's family had contemplated committing \$6,000 to their parish's capital stewardship program, but of late, Tom had come to believe that God wanted them to double that amount. He knew this would not sit well with the family – they would have to already make significant adjustments to give the \$6,000, so he gathered the family to explain his desire and lay out a plan.

Each family member would pray during the week, he told them, asking God to reveal where current expenditures could be freed to increase giving. On Sundays, they would discuss each person's ideas. As a family, they would assign a dollar amount to each suggestion and decide whether or not to pursue it. If God showed them nothing, the family would be free from the commitment of \$12,000.

Three weeks later, Tom's family had 20 wide-ranging strategies to increase their giving. As a family of five who dined out four times a week, they were spending more than \$100 a week. Dining out was cut to twice weekly, and \$50 a week went to the parish's project. Tom had anticipated replacing their car and decided to delay the expenditure of approximately \$3,000 for another year. In the same spirit, they reevaluated their auto and home insurance premiums, cable television and magazine subscriptions, food purchases, and phone usage.

Todd, the middle-school son, began to take his lunch to school rather than buy it, netting \$2 per week, and volunteered to cut his \$10 per week allowance to \$5. Tanya, in high school, cut back on weekly outings with friends and dedicated another \$30 per month to the effort. Individually, each family member made suggestions and offered personal sacrifices, including forgoing an annual vacation. Eventually their ideas totaled just over an additional \$165 per week -- \$8,800 over the year. Tom discovered they could still give the original \$6,000 and take total giving to \$14,000.

"I never dreamed we could do it, but we are pleased God can use us to work through our parish this way," Tom said. "We are a stronger and better family for it."

Not surprisingly, the family's plan was easier to suggest than maintain. Sharon, the wife and mother, said the first three months were the most difficult they ever had as a family. After that, however, what had been difficult became easy. "We discovered that what we thought were necessities were not necessities at all," she said. "It took us three months to discover that."

Struggle is in the nature of a sacrifice. But this family's story illustrates what one family, firmly committed to their faith in God, can achieve through sacrifice to give to the cause of Christ.

*\*While this may not be a common scenario for families in our parish community, this story still serves to help us reflect on the creative ways in which we can all participate in sacrificial giving.*

## SACRIFICIAL GIVING

While traveling in Korea, a businessman noticed a young man pulling a crude plow with an old man holding the handles. "I suppose they are very poor," he said to a missionary guide. "Yes," replied the missionary. "They happen to be Christians. When their church was being built, they were eager to give something, but had no money. So they sold their only ox and gave the proceeds to their church. Now they are plowing by themselves." Stunned for a moment, the businessman said, "That certainly was a great sacrifice." The missionary quickly responded, "They thought they were fortunate to have an ox to sell."

Sacrifice often involves giving up something. It could mean delaying the purchase of an automobile. Some may withdraw funds from bank accounts and investments. Others will readjust their spending budget, denying themselves personal things in order to make room for a pledge. We need to get our priorities straight and be faithful to what has been entrusted to us. We are to make sure that wealth and material possessions always remain a means of serving God and never become ends in themselves.

## What Should My Pledge Be?

What each of us should give is an individual response. Although we all cannot give the same amount, if our gift is motivated by a genuine level of sacrifice ... then the gifts are equal in the sight of God. ***"Every man shall give as he is able, according to the blessing of the Lord your God which He has given you."***

Deuteronomy 16:17 This scripture passage is at the heart of our theme, ***"Not Equal Gifts, but Equal Sacrifice."***



The chart below shows the gifts needed for our parish to raise \$2,500,000. The chart demonstrates how EVERYONE and EACH PLEDGE is needed to bring success. It's a puzzle. If any piece is missing, the puzzle is not complete. **Each one of us** should pray and seek the Lord's guidance on what our piece of the puzzle will be for our **SACRIFICIAL** pledge.

## At What Level is "sacrifice" for you? over and above regular giving

# of Gifts Needed	Possible Payment Options			Total 1-year Gift	Cumulative Total
	Weekly(52)	Monthly(12)	Annual(1)		
<b>Tier 1</b>					
22	\$962	\$4,167	\$50,000	\$50,000	\$1,100,000
8	\$673	\$2,917	\$35,000	\$35,000	\$1,380,000
3	\$481	\$2,083	\$25,000	\$25,000	\$1,455,000
<b>Tier 2</b>					
15	\$192	\$833	\$10,000	\$10,000	\$1,605,000
24	\$135	\$583	\$7,000	\$7,000	\$1,773,000
40	\$115	\$500	\$6,000	\$6,000	\$2,013,000
50	\$96	\$417	\$5,000	\$5,000	\$2,263,000
<b>Tier 3</b>					
55	\$58	\$250	\$3,000	\$3,000	\$2,428,000
30	\$38	\$167	\$2,000	\$2,000	\$2,488,000
10	\$19	\$83	\$1,000	\$1,000	\$2,498,000
Remainder	\$10 or less	\$42 or less	\$500 or less	\$500 or less	\$2,500,000

## Financially supporting St. Peter Church

A great teacher once said that the world uses people to make money while the church uses money to make people.  
We **give** in order to grow as maturing disciples of Jesus Christ.