

- ♦ 'Stewardship of Treasure' Sunday
- ♦ Annual Fiscal Report
- ♦ 5 Reasons for Supporting your Parish Financially

In this four-page report on 'Stewardship of Treasure' Sunday, you will find:

- Remarks on the spirituality of money
- Nine levels of giving to the offertory collection in 2016 and 2017
- Financial report and some comments
- Information on electronic giving and credit card giving

First of all, **THANK YOU** to all of you who week after week, month after month, and year after year, faithfully share with your parish family a portion of your financial resources. Your faithful and generous giving enables us to pay a fair wage to our full-time and part-time parish staff who maintain our facilities and oversee the daily administration of the parish and many of our ministries. For more on all this, see our Fiscal Reports on pages 5 and 6.

The way we make and use our money is a spirituality issue

An old and wise maxim concerning the spiritual life states: "The spiritual life is *all* life" and not just those times when we pray and come to Church. If the spiritual life is *all* of life, then the way we deal with our relationships and with life's hurts and losses, as well as the way we handle our money, either help or hurt our relationship with God. When we see financial resources as a gift from God and we prayerfully seek to be wise and generous stewards of this gift, we impact in a positive way our relationship with God. On the other hand, when we leave God out of this area of our life or choose to be greedy with our financial resources, we hurt our relationship with God.

Some years ago, I read that there are over 2,300 verses in the Bible about money, possessions and the right management of them, and only 500 verses that relate to prayer and faith. Isn't that amazing! I wonder why the Bible talks so much about money way more than I do! Might it be because God is very aware of how preoccupation with money (especially when we have a sufficient amount of it to pay our bills) can be a big distraction to our relationship with him?

Five reasons to be serious and generous with our financial resources

1. God expects us to do so. Every day in my morning prayer, I thank God for the material and spiritual blessings in my life. But I also know that the best way to show my gratitude is by generously sharing both of these blessings with my Church family and wider community I belong to. God did not bless me so that I could be greedy; he blessed me so that I can bless others.

2. We could have been born in a slum here or elsewhere. Everyday, millions of our brothers and sisters in our global family deal with gross poverty. By an accident of birth, we were fortunate enough not to have been one of them. Reflecting on this reality should be reason enough for all of us to be very generous with the financial blessings that we enjoy.

3. Consistent financial giving is God's cure for greedy tendencies. If grief is God's cure for dealing with a loss, and forgiveness is God's cure for healing a hurt, consistent financial giving is God's cure for dealing with any greedy tendencies in us. It's amazing how easily greed can take hold of us—whether we are poor or rich. Some poor and rich people are very generous, and other poor and rich people are very greedy.

4. Generous financial giving makes us a little more like our good and generous God. If forgiving life's hurts makes us more like a forgiving God, generous giving of our financial resources makes us more like our good and generous God.

5. Experience the joy of giving. There is real joy in giving. I am sure many of you have experienced it.

Thank you for taking the time to read this column on an important part of our spiritual life. For information on *Direct Giving*, which is the way more and more Catholics choose to give, see page 7.

Three practical suggestions to prayerfully consider

1. Giving something to the offertory collection basket is always way better than giving nothing.

Giving nothing to the offertory collection is a vote—intended or unintended—to close the parish. While I feel I am pretty sensitive and often helpful to families who are going through a difficult time financially, I firmly believe it is an act of faith in God to *give something* to the offertory collection no matter how poor we are. Remember how Jesus praised the poor widow for her contribution of a few pennies saying that she gave more than all the rest considering her financial situation.

2. If currently your practice is to give "loose change" to the offertory collection, consider moving to the next level.

The next step up from being a "loose change" giver is to become a "percentage giver." After prayerful reflection, all of us would most likely agree that God's work carried out week after week in every parish deserves more than our loose change, especially when we are in a position to give way more than loose change.

When it comes to this aspect of our spiritual life, most 'percentage givers' to the offertory collection would say that 'doing the math' was a significant and important step. When we have the courage to 'do the math,' we may discover that we are more generous than we thought or we may discover that we are not as generous as we thought.

If you have never 'done the math' on what percentage you give to church and charity, please consider doing so. That *would be* a big step when it comes to this aspect of your spiritual life. It would mean you are inviting God into an aspect of your life that you may have thus far kept him out of.

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Loose change. Weekly, we average \$2,300 in loose change. This past fiscal year, we received \$125,000 in loose change. Our average weekly offertory collection is \$37,885. Our Maintenance envelope collection was \$75,200 for the year.

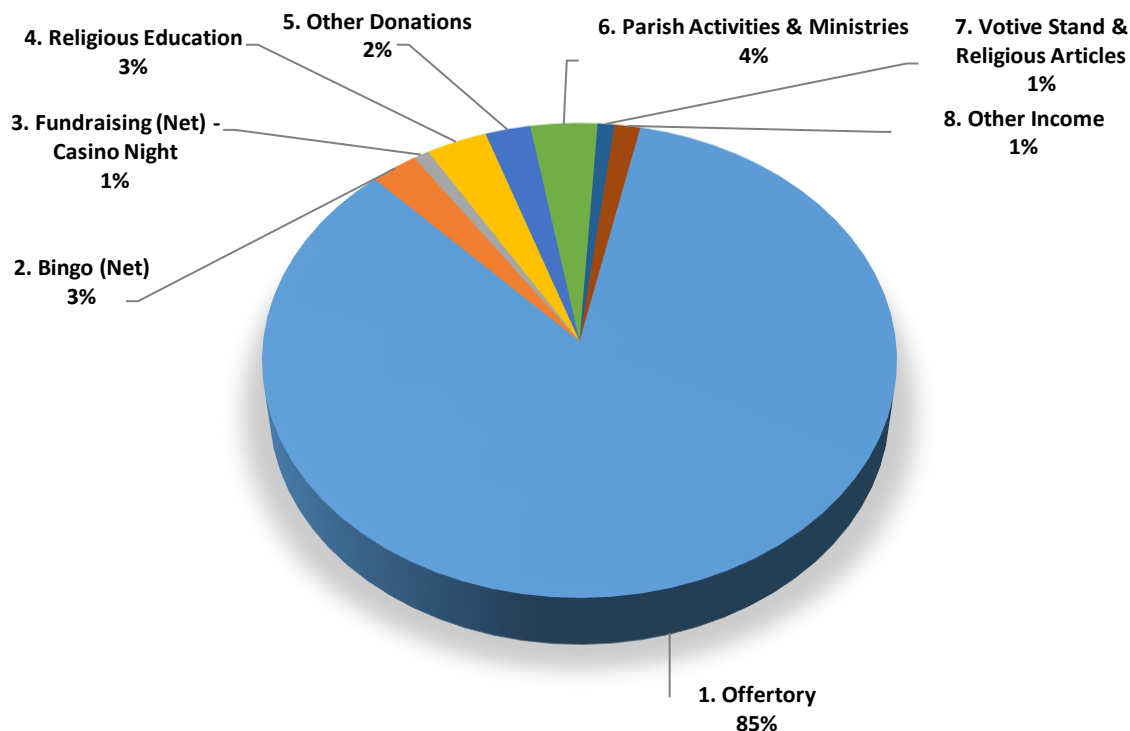
Question: Where are you on this chart? How much of a sacrifice would it take for you to be on the next level up?

Weekly Percentage Rates						
Annual Income	10% per week	5% per week	4% per week	3% per week	2% per week	1% per week
150,000	288	144	115	87	58	29
125,000	240	120	96	72	48	24
100,000	192	96	77	58	38	19
75,000	144	72	58	43	29	14
50,000	96	48	38	29	19	10
25,000	48	24	19	14	10	5
15,000	29	14	12	9	6	3

Where are you on the chart? Where could you be with some added sacrifice?

PARISH FINANCIAL REPORT - REVENUES

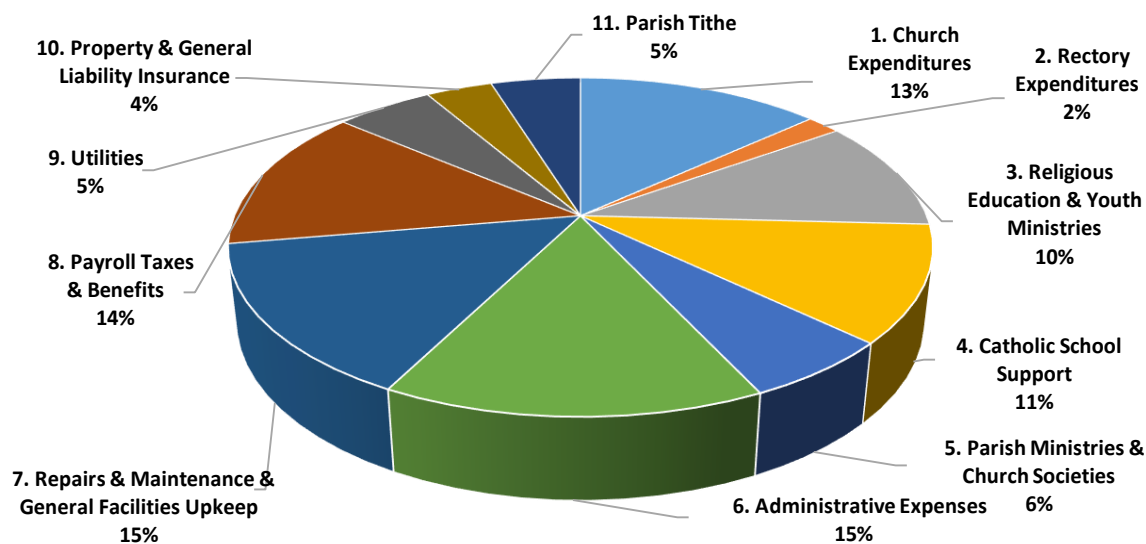
REVENUE SOURCE	6/30/2017
1. Offertory	1,964,391
2. Bingo (Net)	60,635
3. Fundraising (Net) - Casino Night	20,228
4. Religious Education	78,131
5. Other Donations	57,754
6. Parish Activities & Ministries	85,548
7. Votive Stand & Religious Articles	21,424
8. Other Income	33,003
Operating Revenue	2,321,114



1. Sunday Collections; Mailed-in offerings; Credit card and direct giving
2. Bingo helps to fund our school
3. Casino Night helps us support our school
4. Fees for Religious Education programs; Youth Ministry & Middle School retreats, activities and event fees
5. Mass offerings; donations for flowers; other unrestricted direct donations; School envelope portion that goes through Church and transferred to Ascension School
6. Parish social; donuts; Bingo snack bar; Fish Ministry; Church Societies
7. Candle Shrine; literature rack; religious book sales
8. Bulletin revenue; interest income; miscellaneous

PARISH FINANCIAL REPORT - EXPENDITURES

	6/30/2017
1. Church Expenditures	302,638
2. Rectory Expenditures	41,968
3. Religious Education & Youth Ministries	238,224
4. Catholic School Support	251,073
5. Parish Ministries & Church Societies	134,423
6. Administrative Expenses	333,858
7. Repairs & Maintenance & General Facilities Upkeep	331,374
8. Payroll Taxes & Benefits	309,685
9. Utilities	121,133
10. Property & General Liability Insurance	82,179
11. Parish Tithe	110,984
Operating Expenditures	2,257,539



1. Church Expenditures Includes: Clergy and extra Clergy; Liturgy and Music; other support personnel; Liturgical Supplies; Church repairs, maintenance.
2. Rectory: repairs & maintenance; housekeeper; housing allowances - 2 priests' residences.
3. Religious Ed and Faith Formation: program costs; Director of Faith Formation; Youth Minister; Junior-Hi Youth Minister; support personnel; Adult Education programs.
4. Catholic School Support: our offertory support for our school; Melbourne Central Catholic support; support for Seminarians.
5. Parish ministries; ACCW; Retirees.
6. Parish office staff; office expenditures; legal; telephone; printing; advertising; banking fees; miscellaneous expenses.
7. Maintenance & custodial workers - 4 full-time, 2 part-time; repairs & maintenance costs for all facilities: grounds; equipment; parking lot.
8. Payroll taxes; health insurance; pension fund; dental; life insurance.
9. Utilities for all facilities, electric, water, garbage removal.
10. Property taxes (land); liability insurance for all facilities & vehicles.
11. Parish Tithe: support for the poor - locally, nationally and globally.

*Parish staff - 13 full-time, 7 part-time, 6 part-time child care workers.

Automatic Giving

We thank all parishioners who choose to use the automatic method of giving to their Church family. We find more and more people choosing to give in this way, mostly due to the convenience and accessibility of options. Giving electronically allows us to be faithful and consistent in our giving.

We call automatic giving “intentional giving.” It provides the donor peace of mind that his/her donations are accounted for even when traveling away from the parish, while assuring the donee steady and consistent stream of support. It is a win-win for both parties. Generous sharing of our financial resources is the best and most concrete way to say: “Thank you, Lord, for the material blessings in our lives.”

We currently have four methods available for automatic giving. They are: (1) Online giving through the parish website www.ascensioncatholic.net (click on the ‘DONATE’ button), or through “My Parish App” available on your smartphone; (2) Automatic debit from your bank account, set up with the Parish Office; (3) Automatic giving through your credit card, set up with the Parish Office (see pg. 7); or (4) Your own arrangement with your bank for automatic payments by check.

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact Mary Russo at the Parish Office or through email at mrusso@ascensioncatholic.org.

Special Projects completed between 7/1/2016 and 1/1/2018

New roof for old Ministry Building	\$ 140,000
New carpet in old Ministry Building	8,800

Future Projects - 2018 (Estimated Costs)

Church lighting	\$ 75,000
Parking lot lighting	15,000

<u>Diocesan Collections 2016-2017</u>	
Latin America & Catholic University	\$ 1,089.50
Propagation of the Faith (World Mission Sunday)	\$ 2,557.00
Campaign for Human Development & African Church	\$ 1,227.50
Holy Shrines (Good Friday)	\$ 4,951.00
Catholic Relief Services (Bishops' Overseas Appeal)	\$ 1,743.00
Central Eastern Europe	
Catholic Charities	\$ 2,591.00
Operation Rice Bowl	\$ 3,599.51
Holy Father, Peter's Pence	\$ 2,488.00
Catholic Communication Campaign	\$ 1,434.35
Seminarians	\$ 4,256.50
Black/Indian & Home Missions & Farmworker Ministry	\$ 2,121.50
Sister Diocese	\$ 2,627.50
Priest Retirement & Priest Care	\$ 4,672.50
Support for Retired Religious	\$ 11,875.00
Special Collection Floods & Hurricanes	\$ 27,024.00
Mission Coop	\$ 9,400.00
Total Special Collections	\$ 83,657.86