Peter asked, “Lord, how often must I forgive? As many as seven times?”

Matthew 18:21
**ST. MICHAEL PARISH STAFF**

Rev. Msgr. Joseph L. Peterson, Pastor  
stmikes@stmikesparish.org  

Rev. William K. Matheny, Jr., Associate Pastor  
wmatheny@dwc.org  

Wendy Hinerman, Business Manager  
whinerman@stmikesparish.org  

Kathleen Dieffenbaugher, Stewardship Director  
kathleen@stmikesparish.org  

Cindy Barone, Secretary  
secretary@stmikesparish.org  

Chad Carter, Liturgical Music Director, Organist  
ccarter@dwc.org  

Nick Mayrand, Catechesis Coordinator  
nick@stmikesparish.org  

Jenny Imer, Youth Director  
jimer@stmikesparish.org  

**PARISH CONTACT INFORMATION**

*Our Parish Office is across the street from the church*

Parish Office: 304.242.1560  
Parish Fax: 304.243.5710  
Clergy Residence: 304.243.5454  
Website: www.stmikesparish.org  
Email: stmikes@stmikesparish.org  
Facebook: St. Michael Parish - Wheeling, “Almost Heaven” West Virginia

**ST. MICHAEL PARISH SCHOOL STAFF**

Jamie Kovalski, SMPS Principal  
mrskovalski@smpswv.org  
Shandi Nodurft, Advancement  
mrsnodurft@smpswv.org  
Michelle Patterson, SMPS Bookkeeper  
mrspatterson@smpswv.org  
Diane Fahey, SMPS Secretary  
mrsfahey@smpswv.org  
Michelle Koval, SMPS Receptionist  
mrskoval@smpswv.org

**PARISH SCHOOL CONTACT INFORMATION**

School Office 304.242.3966  
School Fax 304.214.6578  
Website: www.smpswv.org  
Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/STMichaelParishWheeling  

**PARISH COUNCILS & COMMITTEES**

Pastoral Council - Leslie Kosanovic, President  
Stewardship Council - Louis Volpe, President  
Buildings & Grounds - Denny Wilson, Chairperson  
Finance Council - Brann Altmeyer, Interim President

**ST. MICHAEL PARISH ADVISORY BOARD**

Danielle Doerr - President

**WEEKLY READINGS**

**Mon.** 1 Tm 2:1-8; Ps 28:2, 7-9; Lk 7:1-10  
**Tues.** 1 Tm 3:1-13; Ps 101:1b-3ab, 5-6; Lk 7:11-17  
**Wed.** 1 Tm 3:14-16; Ps 111:1-6; Lk 7:31-35  
**Thurs.** Eph 4:1-7, 11-13; Ps 19:2-5; Mt 9:9-13  
**Fri.** 1 Tm 6:2c-12; Ps 49:6-10, 17-20; Lk 8:1-3  
**Sat.** 1 Tm 6:13-16; Ps 100:1b-5; Lk 8:4-15  
**Sun.** Is 55:6-9; Ps 145:2-3, 8-9, 17-18; Phil 1:20c-24, 27a; Mt 20:1-16a  

**SAINTS AND SPECIAL OBSERVANCES**

Sunday: Twenty-fourth Sunday in Ordinary Time; Catechetical Sunday  
Tuesday: St. Januarius  
Wednesday: Ss. Andrew Kim Tae-gôn, Paul Chông Ha-sang, and Companions; Rosh Hashanah (Jewish New Year 5778) begins at sunset  
Thursday: St. Matthew  
Friday: Autumn begins  
Saturday: St. Pius of Pietrelcina (Padre Pio)

The **Sacrament of Penance & Reconciliation** is held 3pm-4pm on Saturday, 8am on First Saturday, or by appointment.

Please contact the secretary at the Parish Office if you are interested in any of the following: **Baptism, Matrimony** (six months prior to the desired wedding date), **Anointing of the Sick, Christian Initiation of Adults, or joining the parish.**

To arrange a pastoral visit for **Homebound Parishioners** please contact Kathleen Dieffenbaugher at the Parish Office.

**Eucharistic Adoration** is held Monday 8am-5pm, 6pm-10pm; Tuesday, Thursday, Friday 8am-5pm; Wednesday 10am-5pm; Saturday 8am-noon.

**Collection & Attendance Data: September 9/10, 2017**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Collection</th>
<th>Attendance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4:30pm</td>
<td>292</td>
<td>111</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9:00am</td>
<td>209</td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**TOTAL**—812  
1st Collection: $9,083.00  
2nd Collection (School Support): $7,314.35  
Misc. Collections (including Disaster): $4,311.00  

**TOTAL**: $20,708.35
**MASS SCHEDULE**

Saturday, September 16
7:30am  Vicki Lynn Burns
4:30pm  Millie Mulhern

Sunday, September 17
7:30am  John P. Peterson (A)
9:00am  People of the Parish
11:30am  Adeline Leffe

Monday, September 18
7:30am  Edward Covey
5:30pm  Margaret & Howard Lane

Tuesday, September 19
7:30am  Jim Muroski

Wednesday, September 20
8:30am  Ethel Johnson
5:30pm  Katie Siegal

Thursday, September 21
7:30am  Thomas Emmerth

Friday, September 22
7:30am  Monica Fitzsimmons

Saturday, September 23
7:30am  Roger High
4:30pm  Sylvia Durante Santavicca

Sunday, September 24
7:30am  Steve Kiss & Verna Kiss (living)
9:00am  Madge Emmerth
11:30am  People of the Parish

The Sanctuary Candle beside the tabernacle burns this week (Sept. 17 - Sept. 24) in memory of:

**Sr. Carol Hannig, CSJ**

The flowers on the altar are in memory of:

**June Bryson**

CCHS and The Serra Club of Wheeling will sponsor a Rosary Rally today for an increase of those called to the vocation of the priesthood and the consecrated life. Please join us in the Cathedral of St. Joseph Courtyard beginning at 6:00pm on September 17.

---

**Our parish will joyfully celebrate our Patronal Feastday on September 29 (Feast of Saints Michael, Gabriel and Raphael, archangels)**

All parishioners and friends are invited to join us for a festive celebration of the Mass at 10:00am on this day with the participation of the entire St. Michael Parish School. We are privileged to have our Bishop Michael Bransfield join us for this celebration (as it is his feastday, too, having the name of Michael.)

This stained glass window depicting Michael is found in our choir loft on the left side. Photo by Amanda Yoellinger.

---

“Give your Hands to Serve and your Hearts to Love”

Thank you to the 116 parishioners who have brought us to 48% of our goal, BUT we need more of you to respond to this appeal which supports programs that benefit parishes throughout the diocese (including our own parish!) Please consider making a gift today at this link: www.dwc.org/CSA

---

**Catholic Sharing Appeal 2017**

$63,845

[Goal: $60,000]
LITURGICAL MINISTERS

Saturday, September 23, 4:30pm
Sacristan: Joe Bourgo
Lector: Danielle Agcaoili
Altar Servers: Faith & Sara Zende, Olen Ames, Thomas Komorowski
EMOHCS: Jen Carter, Marianne Blair, Donna Clark, Ava Zende, Rose Zende

Sunday, September 24, 7:30am
Sacristan: Mike Rempe
Lector: Amy Miesel
Altar Servers: DJ Daugherty, Sarah Keane
EMOHCS: Kathy Ulevich, Rudy Conti, Kathy Galinski, Peek Gutman, Joe Roxby

Sunday, September 24, 9:00am
Sacristan: Phil Emmerth
Lector: Marcy Hartzell
Altar Servers: John Emmerth, Amelia Mandel, Will Medovic, Luca Swartz
EMOHCS: Phil Emmerth, Marybeth Emmerth, Emily Emmerth, Camille Basinger, April Stolfer

Sunday, September 24, 11:30am
Sacristan: Jamie Kovalski
Lector: Lynne Petchar
Altar Servers: Dominic, Jimmy & John Brogan, Parker Jasko
EMOHCS: Jamie Kovals, Jay McLaughlin, Tom Conti, Nancy Conti, Rebecca Petrosino

St. Michael Parish welcomes:

ADALYNN GRACE ECKMAN
(daughter of Justin and Emily Eckman)

ANN MARIE & LAWRENCE JAY PIKO
(twins of Lawrence and Valerie Piko)

to our Christian community through the waters of Baptism. You have put on Christ – In Him you have been baptized. Alleluia! Alleluia!

Across the diocese, a special collection for this Disaster Recovery will be taken up on September 16/17. We ask that you use the special envelopes which will be in the pews that weekend if you wish to contribute to this collection. Our parish’s donations to the Disaster Relief collection will benefit Sacred Heart Parish and School in Rockport, Texas.

Father Bill especially thanks everyone for their support to help his seminary classmate and good friend’s church and school buildings. The church building and rectory experienced minimal wind damage, but the school, parish office, and parish hall suffered major damage. Please check out the photos posted on St. Michael Parish’s Facebook page.

Journey of the Chalice schedule:
In the month of September the chalice will transfer at the 9:00am Mass.
9/17: Margaret Zoeckler
9/24: Phil & Marybeth Emmerth

The purpose of the Journey of The Chalice program is to encourage families to pray and promote vocations to the Priesthood and Religious Life. Praying for vocations is the most powerful way to support vocations. When we pray for vocations, we lift up to our Father those men and women whom He is calling to follow Him in a very special way.
Parish School of Religion (PSR) Classes are Underway!

This Sunday, September 17th, marks the first official day of the new PSR year! A welcome ceremony commences at 10:15am in the cafeteria for PSR families, followed by the first class sessions of the year for the students. If you have not registered your student(s) but would like to do so, please stop by the Parish Office or contact Nick Mayrand at 937-304-9543 or mayrand.nick@outlook.com for registration information.

Have you noticed this section of the bulletin in recent weeks but aren’t sure what PSR actually does? PSR (Parish School of Religion) offers religious formation for parish youth from kindergarten through eighth grade who do not attend St. Michael’s school. Stay tuned to this section for periodic biographies of our generous volunteer catechists and stories from our class sessions as the year unfolds!

Sunday Social after ALL Masses THIS WEEKEND. Please join us in the school cafeteria after Mass to chat with your fellow parishioners while enjoying some snacks!!

Let us pray in joy for Dexter Hazel & Molly Starkey who will be married at St. Michael Church on September 23.

May God bless them with much happiness on their married journey as husband and wife!

On this Catechetical Sunday (9/17/17), we express our appreciation to all of our teachers and catechists who work diligently in teaching our faith. As well, this is a wonderful opportunity to reflect on the role that each person plays, by virtue of Baptism, in handing on the faith and being a witness to the Gospel.

The Parish Pastoral Council invites you to mark your calendars for a St. Michael Parish Town Hall Meeting on October 1, 2017. We will begin the evening with 5:00pm Mass followed by the Town Hall meeting. More details will be listed in upcoming bulletins. See You There!!!

The community of St. Michael Parish offers our sympathy and prayers for the repose of the souls of…

† June Bryson
† Sr. Carol Hannig, CSJ
† Maurice Ackerman

May their souls and the souls of all the faithful departed, through the mercy of God, continue their journey to new life in the presence of God in the heavenly kingdom.

Congratulations to:
Matt & Brigid (Cain) Przybysz
married on September 9 at Our Lady of Peace, Wheeling WV

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May their souls and the souls of all the faithful departed, through the mercy of God, continue their journey to new life in the presence of God in the heavenly kingdom.
This week you received a mailing from us about our Increased Offertory campaign. (If you didn't receive it, we may need to update your contact information in our database. Please call our new secretary, Cindy Barone, and give her your info. And, if you did receive it, and just want to say hello to Cindy, call or stop by the office. She loves meeting and chatting with our parishioners and you'll enjoy meeting her, too!)

The fundamental goal of the campaign is to share the financial needs of our parish. Our Finance Council worked diligently to prepare a financial report which would clearly demonstrate the state of our income and expenses. Monsignor Peterson authored a letter to thank you for your generosity and also to ask you to reflect on your giving commitment to the church.

The parish staff worked to combine those pieces and to create the flyer. Putting together the flyer was a great experience. It was an excellent refresher course in the life of our parish. Kathleen Dieffenbaugher had such a long list of ministries! When you review the side panel list of the many ways we utilize time you'll be amazed. And when you stop to ponder the number of stewards represented, it's fantastic!

We used seven photographs on the flyer. Our Stewardship Council friend, Janet Boyle, was kind enough to come to the office and took photos of Monsignor Peterson. Janet's son, Kevin Cogan, was our photo editor. The cover photo of the church is credited to professional photographer, Neil Warren. He took the shot from a scissor lift that was in the front yard of Elmhurst. The school shared a copy of a great photo taken after school Mass on a Wednesday. The First Holy Communion photo was used by permission from our parishioner, Heather DeFranco from Snapshot Photography.

The true challenge was selecting a couple of candid photos which would demonstrate the love and devotion that we feel each and every day. Don't get me wrong, we had plenty of options. We had photographs scattered all over the conference table. Each photo showed the many facets of our parish; prayer services, faith formation, outreach, education, social justice, and celebrations. Trying to narrow the selection to only a few was not easy.

They say a picture is worth a thousand words. Indeed! Look at the photos and you'll agree. We have an incredible, faith filled and loving church community. WE ARE ST MIKES!

Our Increased Offertory Program Commitment Sunday is this weekend at all Masses. We encourage all parishioners to complete and turn in your commitment cards to the church. The Commitment Card contains information on how to plan your increased offertory gift to the church, and asks for your commitment over the next year. If you have any questions regarding this program, or how to give electronically, please contact the parish office.  

-Wendy Hinerman, Business Manager
WHO WANTS TO BE A "HEAVENLY" MILLIONAIRE?

SAINTS  This saint’s feast day is celebrated the day after Christmas:
A. Saint John the Apostle  
B. Saint John the Baptist  
C. Saint Stephen  
D. Saint Thomas Becket

Last week’s answer: Jesus’ first public miracle was changing water into wine

St. Michael Parish and NAMI Wheeling to Host Interfaith Prayer Service on Mental Illness: October 3

St. Michael Parish and the NAMI - Wheeling will again host an interfaith service to pray for families struggling with mental illness at 6:30 p.m. Tuesday, Oct. 3rd. The event, which will take place at St. Michael Church at 1225 National Road in Wheeling, has been held every year for more than a decade as part of National Mental Illness Awareness Week.

Christina Fisanick, Ph.D, who has written extensively about her experiences with mental illness, will speak about Binge Eating Disorders. Dr. Fisanick, is an English professor at California University of Pennsylvania and author of several books, including the recently published, “The Optimistic Food Addict: Recovering from Binge Eating Disorder.”

Also speaking will be Donald Hofreuter, MD, who will discuss his experience as part of a team of volunteer medical professionals who provide care to uninsured and underinsured people in our area, including many who suffer from mental illness.

Everyone who attends the vigil will have the opportunity to light a prayer candle in honor of a friend or loved one who suffers with mental illness. Refreshments will be served at an informal social gathering following the service. For information, call Kathleen Dieffenbaugher, St. Michael Parish Stewardship Director, at 304.242.1560.

RITE OF CHRISTIAN INITIATION FOR ADULTS

St. Michael Parish would like to personally invite you to consider our RCIA program this year.

RCIA is an acronym for the Rite of Christian Initiation for Adults. In other words, any adult who is interested in joining the Catholic Church becomes a member of the church through the RCIA process or series of RCIA classes. Classes are held each year beginning in the fall and begin in September.

The first class will be Sunday, September 17th, 2017 at 10:00am in the Parish Office.

We would like to invite you to consider becoming a member of the Catholic Church. You are an important part of our parish community. If you cannot attend the initial meeting in September but wish to receive more information about this program, call the Parish office (304-242-1560) and they will give your name to the RCIA team. Then someone from the team will be happy to meet with you at another time.

Please join us as we “Discover the Catholic Church” together. Growing closer to God is a life-long process of journeying together as a community of faith.

Our team is here to support you on the journey.

St. Michael Parish RCIA Team:  Fr. William K. Matheny, Jr. wmatheny@dwc.org; Louis Volpe volpefarm@hotmail.com; Dr. Thomas Przybysz; Dr. Eric Halicki; Margaret Erickson; Kristy Reidel; Bridget Ammons.

Please pray for these men and women serving our country in the military, and for their families:

- Petty Officer First Class Eric J Auber, US Navy
- Staff Sergeant Robert Michael Baker, US Marine Corps
- Sergeant Anthony DiBias, US Army
- Chief Warrant Officer 4 John DiBias, US Army
- Lieutenant Andrew Klug, US Navy
- Captain Zach Lehman, US Marine Corps
- Capt. Michael Neuman, US Army
- Major Christopher Nodur, US Marine Corps
- Seaman Cody Patterson, US Navy
- Specialist Seth Sleime, US Army
- Sgt. Christopher Snyder, US Army
- First Sergeant Stephen Spohn, US Army
- Sergeant First Class Wendy Spohn, US Army
- Lieutenant Colonel Aaron P Tillman, US Air Force
- Chief Master Sergeant Patrick Van Vranken, US Air Force
- Airman First Class Taylor Wilkinson, US Air Force
- Airman First Class Sierra E. McKenna, US Air Force

Please contact the Parish Office with changes in rank or to add someone to the list. Thanks to ALL who have served or are currently serving!
September 22nd: CCHS or Mustang dress-down day. This is not on the calendar but is in support of our partner school CCHS homecoming celebrations!

September 22nd: Angel Walk forms due

September 29th: St. Michael’s Feast Day: Mass at 10am with Bishop Bransfield and entire SMPS

October 3rd: School Picture

October 6th: Wear your wings; earn your halo! Dress down day!

October 6th: PA Bake Sale

October 8th: Mustang Mass 9:00 am

October 13th: Angel Walk @ WJU

October 17th-20th: REAP 6th Grade

October 20th: STAR Assembly 2:00 pm

October 22nd: Trunk or Treat

October 31st: Halloween Attire dress down day!

GRANDPERSON’S DAY 2017-2018

October 25th: Grandparent's Day TK-2

November 8th: Grandparent’s Day 3-5

December 6th: Grandparent’s Day 6-8th

LAST WEEK MISPRINT!

Our first (GPD) Grandperson Day is on October 25th NOT September 25th!

St. Michael Parish School is proud to present our newly-elected, Student Council Members for the 2017-2018 school year!

President: Andrew Tiu

Vice President: Andrew Hartzell

Treasurer: Nathan Dieffenbaugher

Secretary: Olivia Kahle

8M Representatives: Emma Nodurft & Andrew Johnson

8E Representatives: Danielle Agcaoili & Nathan Stryker

7K Representatives: Elizabeth Romanek & Ryan Costanzo

6A Representatives: Taylor Andrews & Isaac Schmitt

6G Representatives: Ramsay Mansuetto & Thomas Komorowski

5A Representatives: Gianna Cipriani & Mason Schmitt

Congratulations to our new officers!
St. Michael Parish School would like to introduce our new preschool 4 teacher Miss Peyton Bertram. Peyton joined us in August of 2017. She grew up in Moundsville, WV. She is a graduate of Cameron High School. She has her B.S. degree from West Liberty State College in Elementary Education. She comes to us from All Saints Catholic School where she taught 3rd and 4th grade. She loves animals! Peyton lives on a farm with horses, cattle, donkeys and dogs. She is also a cheerleading coach in her spare time in Cameron. Please join us in welcoming Peyton to our SMPS family!

Meet Miss Peyton Bertram
St. Michael Parish School
Preschool 4 Teacher

Our Seventh Annual Angel Walk--one of the school’s largest fundraisers--will be held on Friday, Oct. 13. We thank Wheeling Jesuit University for once again sponsoring this annual event and for serving as the host site for this special event!

This year we are asking SMPS Alumni to join the walking fun and fellowship. We would like to honor our alumni at the Angel Walk. Look for more details soon!

Parents, as we have done in the past, we are asking each family to complete 12 Request for Sponsorship mailers and return them to the school by Friday, September 22. The school will provide the postage and send the mailers out to the potential sponsors. For all students that turn in all 12 forms by September 22nd, they will receive a dress-down day on Monday, September 25th.

There will be forms inside the school doors for anyone wishing to donate to the Angel Walk that doesn’t receive one from a school family! We are looking forward to another great Angel Walk!

Special thank you to: Melissa Mansuetto for her generous donation of time, talent and treasure to our Box Top Shop; Deb Freels for hours of service in the preschool 3 classroom; Missy Tiu, Sue Simpson, Tina Brothers, Chrissy Andrews, Karen Kahle, Andrea Ekanem, Francesca Ghigo, Grace Agacaoili, Susie Nau, Julie Blake and McKenzie Keane for their help this week serving hot lunch!

Our school is a better place because you are here!
The Knights of Columbus will be giving away Tootsie Rolls after Mass this weekend. All donations will be given to Russell Nesbitt/WATCH and the ARC of Ohio County.

Office of Safe Environment

Keeping you informed …
The Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston is committed to the protection of its children and young people. The Diocese complies with the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops’ Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People by maintaining an Office of Safe Environment. To report an incident of suspected child sexual abuse, please contact your local law enforcement agency, or you may confidentially contact the West Virginia Bureau for Children and Families/Child Protective Services by calling the Child Abuse Hotline at 800.352.6513. To report suspected cases of sexual abuse by personnel of the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston to the Diocese, please contact one of the Bishop’s designees at 888.434.6237 (toll free) or 304.233.0880: Sister Ellen Dunn, ext. 264; Mr. Bryan Minor, ext. 263; Msgr. Frederick Annie, ext. 267, or Msgr. Anthony Cincinnati, 270. For more information on the Diocese’s Office of Safe Environment, please go to www.dwc.org, then click the “Diocese” tab, then click “Office of Safe Environment” under the “Offices” menu. To learn more about the Catholic Church’s efforts in preventing sexual abuse of children in the United States, please visit http://www.usccb.org under “Issues and Action,” click “Child and Youth Protection” from the drop down menu.
Building a Better Future

West Virginia resident Amanda had dropped out of high school and started a family at a young age. Although her family was struggling, she refused to be defined by her situation. “At the lowest point in my life, I asked myself if I wanted to be like this for the rest of my life, and the answer was no,” said Amanda. Amanda enrolled in Catholic Charities West Virginia’s (CCWV) case management services, and she received the guidance, resources and support she needed to achieve her goals. Amanda earned her High School Equivalency diploma, and then went on to secure a job at the local Wal-Mart pharmacy. Amanda’s success is inspirational, especially for her own teenagers. They are proud of their mother, and have seen how it is possible to make positive changes that can create a better future.

Early Intervention Helps Children Reach Their Potential

The Carrell-Jacks family was devastated when they learned that their newborn daughter, Amelie, was deaf. With no personal experience with deafness, they felt lost and alone, until they were referred to Catholic Charities West Virginia’s Birth to Three RAU1 program.

“Our team was incredibly supportive through Amelie’s cochlear implant surgery and aural rehabilitation,” said Lynnsey Carrell-Jacks. “We could not have afforded the level of services Amelie needed without significant financial strain, and her development would have suffered as a result.”

Amelie now uses listening and spoken language, and her oral communication skills are above average for her age. “I do not think any of this would have been possible without the early intervention she received through Birth to Three.”

Amelie’s younger sister, Hazel, was also born with the same condition and receives Birth to Three services. “Our girls amaze us every day, and we are so grateful this program exists to help our children reach their fullest potential!”

Catholic Charities West Virginia

Seventh Annual Autumn Gathering

Save the Date
October 27, 2017
St. John XXIII Pastoral Center

Wheeling (CCNC): 304-232-7157  Hancock/Brooke Co.: 304-830-2410

Working To Reduce Poverty in West Virginia

Our mission is to alleviate poverty, distress, and injustice by providing comprehensive social services to the poor and vulnerable, advocating for social justice, and calling all people of good will, especially those of the Church, to service.

www.CatholicCharitiesWV.org

Newsletters printed and distributed courtesy of the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston
What your pastor won’t tell you about parish giving

Our parishes are getting by on too little from too few,
but it wouldn’t take much to change that

Joanne McPortland January 9, 2017

It’s that time of year. Your new set of Sunday offering envelopes arrives in the mail, or you pick up the box after Mass. Maybe you’re still hearing echoes of last fall’s pleas for a renewed commitment to weekly parish giving. Or your parish is beginning the pledge process for the annual diocesan collection. Registration opens for next fall’s Catholic school classes.

You might catch yourself grumbling, “Money! Money! Money! That’s all Father ever talks about!”

Here’s a secret: Father dreads this even more than you do. And another secret: Whether it’s once or twice a year (which is standard) or more frequently (when driven by dire necessity), chances are that if Father has to mention money at all, he’s not talking about it nearly often enough.

Think about that first part. Your pastor is living out his priestly vocation to preach the Gospel, minister the sacraments, and bring people to Christ. Unless his was a late-in-life calling from the business world, it’s unlikely that he was ever trained in the branch management of a good-sized non-profit corporation, which is the equivalent of the pastor’s secular responsibilities. Your average diocesan priest hates talking about money even more than you hate hearing about it.

Fortunately, your pastor probably has more support to draw on now than pastors had in your parents’ or grandparents’ day. Diocesan stewardship offices provide guidance and resources, and many parishes have finance committees or parish councils with members who have business and finance backgrounds. Pastors have more help making wise financial decisions.

But here’s something that hasn’t changed in generations — and it’s the reason Father can’t talk about money enough. The average share of our income that we U.S. Catholics give to our Church (including not just weekly parish giving, but special collections and other Church-related charities) is a mere 1% — the same as it’s been as long as anyone’s been counting.

That’s the lowest percentage of giving of any major religious denomination in the United States. The truth is that fewer than 1 in 3 Americans who identify themselves as Catholic attend Mass on a “regular” basis (defined as at least once a month). And of those regular attendees, only 30% give to the support of their parish. Of those, many are likely to toss the same 2 or 3 crumpled dollar bills into the collection basket as their parents did before them.

And this in a time when just keeping the lights on, the boiler heated up, the organ in tune, and the parking lot free of potholes costs more than ever.

Nobody wants to talk about the basic operating costs of a parish, but if they aren’t met there is no place for the community to worship, no support for the many ministries and outreach efforts that make a parish so much more than a building.

Father hates having to nickel-and-dime the congregation from the pulpit. But when so few of us have any real notion of or commitment to real parish stewardship, he often has no choice. That term, stewardship, has become more familiar in recent years, as Catholics are called to a more integrated, conscious discipleship. In parishes where real attitudes and practices of stewardship have taken hold, there’s a relatively seamless and widely shared commitment of time, talent, and treasure.
What your pastor won’t tell you about parish giving (con’t)

It shows up in higher attendance levels, successful evangelization, and well-funded parish ministries. It also shows up in Father not having to talk about money all the time.

Too often, though, pastors get such blowback from parishioners about pushing the “treasure” element of stewardship that parishes settle for commitments of time and talent by the same small group of people who always volunteered them anyway. And because time and talent do not substitute for treasure, poor Father is back to nickel-and-diming. It makes parish giving, which should be a grateful response to God’s gifts and a regular part of Catholic discipleship, feel like being hounded to pay an overdue cable bill. That’s not pleasant for anyone!

So the hard truth is that our parishes are getting by on too little from too few. (That’s especially a problem, paradoxically enough, in our largest parishes, maybe because everybody figures everyone else must be giving.) The good news is that it wouldn’t take much from each of us to change that. Here are some things to consider as the new year begins.

Give consciously. Write your parish into your family budget. Whether it’s on a yearly, monthly, or weekly basis, make your parish offering a line item. Planning ahead will keep you from resorting to digging in your pockets for spare change as the collection basket comes by. Using weekly offering envelopes or participating in an online giving program, if your parish offers one, are two good ways to make your giving conscious.

Give off the top. When determining how much to give our parish, many of us look to what’s left over after other obligations have been met. We give out of scarcity and fear, rather than gratitude. Try (at least for a few weeks or months) putting your relationship with God and his people first. Whatever we have we owe to God’s generosity.

Give more than you think you can. People sometimes ask about whether there’s a biblical standard. The tithe, or one-tenth of one’s wealth or income, is often mentioned in the Bible, and many Christians today aim for a 10% level of annual giving divided among church and charities. (Parish giving, though tax-deductible, is not charity for Catholics. It’s a precept, a joyful obligation.) But Jesus told his rich follower to sell all that he had and give it to the poor — 100%! He praised the poor widow who gave her last two coins to the Temple. In your prayerful consideration, strike a balance between 1% and 100% — pledge to give what you really can and maybe a little more, and to give it gladly and regularly. Don’t compare yourself to others; your giving is a covenant between you and your family and God, and God is never outdone in generosity.

Give yourself. Consider ways to be more involved in the life of your parish this year. See your gifts at work in the various ministries. Explore new ways to use your time and talents in the service of others, not as a substitute for financial support, but as a way of living what that support symbolizes.

It would take very little, in practice, to move that 1% of annual income level of giving to 2%. For most people, that’s the weekly equivalent of a couple of large lattes or a gallon or two of gas. What could your parish do with twice as much financial support every week? And it wouldn’t take much to make it 2 out of 3, or even 3 out of 3, who give regularly.

You can make that difference, starting now. And then maybe you and Father can both stop dreading this time of year.

[Editor’s Note: Parishes that wish to reprint this particular piece for their bulletin are free to do so, but are asked to include attribution to the author and to Aleteia.org ]

- See more at: http://aleteia.org/2017/01/09/what-your-pastor-wont-tell-you-about-parish-giving/#sthash.JTNWNe4P.dpuf
THIRD ANNUAL NOVENA TO ST. JUDE,
on Thursdays 7:00 pm beginning August 31 to October 26 at St. Jude Parish (710 Jefferson Ave, Glen Dale, WV). This Solemn Novena to the patron of Desperate Cases will include, Novena prayers, Homily, Eucharistic Exposition and Benediction. For more information contact (304) 845-2646.

The overall theme for this year is “The Blessings of the ANXIETY DISORDERS PROGRAM at WHEELING HOSPITAL: Informational Open House on Tuesday, September 19, 2017 6:30 - 7:30 PM in Conference Room “C” (just off the Main Lobby). This program is FREE OF CHARGE! To register, contact Beth (Wheeling Hospital Community Education), 304-243-3339. Help is available for those suffering from acute anxiety and/or panic attacks.
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