

Tithe to the Church!

Many of us enjoy eating at **Jim ‘N Nick’s** here in Gardendale. Not only do they offer satisfying food and service ... they favor us by funding most of the bill when they provide **BBQ sandwiches** for our annual **Parish Appreciation Luncheon** in March.

Jim ‘N Nick’s is a “for profit” business, which means they provide food and service and hope to receive income that **not only enables them to pay their employees and vendors and do maintenance** ... **but** they hope to make **a little profit** in the process.

Why do people go there?

Well, basically they go there to get fed ... to nourish themselves with **good food**. And they enjoy doing it in a pleasing atmosphere with friendly people to serve them.

They go for **the whole experience of dining** and they don’t mind paying for it ... yes ... **people willingly pay a bill and even leave a tip** to show their satisfaction.

Now for a moment, let’s compare **Jim ‘N Nick’s** to **St. Elizabeth Ann Seton/St. Henry**.

St. Elizabeth Ann Seton/ St. Henry is a “not for profit” business, where we provide spiritual food and service and hope to receive income ... not to make a profit ... **but simply to cover all our costs and serve the needs of the people**.

Like **Jim ‘N Nick’s**, here at **St. Elizabeth Ann Seton/St. Henry** we too have to pay all our employees, which includes: me, the Parish Secretaries, our Cleaning crew, our Grounds & Maintenance men, our Pianists and Cantors ...

and we have to pay all our Vendors that provide: our Church and Office supplies, our Pest Control, our Phone Service, our Copier Service, our Garbage Service, our Security Monitoring Service, our Lawn weed & feed service & our Cable TV service ...

and we have to pay our Utilities that include **Power, Gas and Water**.

Why do people go to St. Elizabeth Ann Seton/ St. Henry?

Well, as with **Jim ‘N Nick’s**, they come here to get fed ...

they come here to nourish themselves ... **not with physical food** ...

but with spiritual food. ... the word and the Sacrament of God.

And they enjoy doing it in a pleasing atmosphere with friendly people to serve them.

So, here too, people come for the whole experience and ...

the expectation would be that they would contribute for the service they receive.

What's different here is that **no bill is presented at the end of the experience.**

Rather, a collection is taken up in the middle of the experience ... and the expectation is ... that all people would know and honor the proper amount to give ... based on the rate established long ago ... by God.

The rate is called a tithe, which means "tenth"

Yes, God ordained that all people would express their gratitude to Him for blessings received ... by giving back to Him the first tenth ... the first 10% ... of the income that they received.

So, while Jim 'N Nick's advise you of your bill each time you attend ... St. Elizabeth Ann Seton/ St. Henry simply expects you to know the proper amount to give. Both JNN and SEAS/SH expect you to pay for what you receive.

While everything belongs to God,
He asks for just 10% of our income to be given to Him ...
which means that we get to keep the **remaining 90%!**

This idea of a **fixed rate** for all people is **very fair** because it **insures** that **both the rich and the poor pay at the same rate.**

For example, the guy that makes \$120,000/a year would pay \$12,000 in tithe,
while **the guy that makes \$12,000/a year would pay \$1,200 in tithe.**
While one pays a lot more money ... both pay 10% to God.

So, whether you make a lot of money or just a little money ...
each person is paying the same rate of return to God through His Church.

You know, **on occasion** I hear people say, "*I can't tithe; I make too much money!*"
Or **some** say, "*I can't tithe; I make too little money!*" Well **10% is 10% ...**
it's **not related to how much** you make, **the same rate applies to all.**

Sometimes too, I hear people say, "*I can't tithe; I'm on a fixed income.*"
Well, **you know what ... most people are on a fixed income!** I make **\$19,000 / year**
... so I get **the same pay, week after week ... year after year.**

Very few people work on commission ... where their income varies week to week.
If you're **retired & your Pension or your Social Security or your Retirement Fund**
pays you \$1,000 a month or \$1,600 a month or \$2,000 a month ... that's income!
And **God expects you to pay your tithe on that income.**

He says so in His Book ... the Holy Bible ... Tithing is mentioned 46 times!

Tithing involves giving back to God from the **first fruits** of our labors.

Tithing does **2 very important things**:

1. It enables us to **show our gratitude to God ... in a tangible way ...** for His **countless blessings**,
 - It's like sending a **Thank You note** for a gift we've received.
2. It enables **His Church** to sustain itself and to grow.
 - For it takes money to run and operate **each parish Church**.

Now for **those of you** who are **new** to our Parish or **just visiting** our Parish, please realize that in **this Parish**, I **only** talk about **money** on **2** of **52 weeks** per year:

First, in **Jan.** - to remind everyone of **their duty** to support **this Parish** financially, Then in **Sept.** - to invite people to give alms to help the needy of **this Diocese**.

So today is my annual reminder about **Tithing**.

Tithing is not my plan ... it's **God's plan!** It's there **46 times** in the **Bible!**

For **example**, in the Book of **Deuteronomy** we read, "No one shall appear before the Lord empty-handed, but each of you with as much as he can give, in proportion to the blessings which the Lord, your God, has bestowed on you."

No matter how you earn your wages, whether it's with **your hands** as a Laborer, Craftsman, Tradesman or **your brains** as a Business Professional or your Retirement/SS that's only possible **because God** has gifted you with those things.

Your **talents** and **abilities** are a **huge gift** from God.

- You honor Him **when** you use them for good purposes.
- And you thank Him when you give Him back the **first fruits** of your labors.

While **many of us** who grew up **Catholic** may not have heard **Tithing** preached in the past, it has always been **the method** that **God** established to support **His Church**.

Our **Protestant** brothers and sisters understand **Tithing** well and follow it closely. The large brick churches that they erect are a **testimony** to **their members** giving at the level that God established.

I understand that **some Protestant Churches** hold **tithing** as a **requirement** to be in their church! I just read a true story of a couple seeking to become Christian who in going through the learning process were told that they couldn't come in **until** they met their tithing obligation. They waited **one year** to be able to tithe and come in!

The **Catholic Church** doesn't hold tithing as a requirement for attending or participating ... **so the weight of following God's plan is on each individual person.**

The **American Bishops** suggest the following plan for **Tithing**.

Give **5%** to your Parish, and **5%** to the Charities of your choice.

Figuring our **your contribution** to our Parish is **so simple** ... just take your **Gross Income** from last year and calculate **5%** of that number and dividing by **52 weeks** and you have your weekly donation to the **Church** and your weekly donation to the **Charities** of your choice.

Then you're giving as God asks you to give. And you get to keep the **other 90%**.

God calls us to **Tithe** ...

it's **His plan** for **how** we are to take care of the needs of **His Church**.

Tithe does not mean donation ... **tithe** means **tenth!**

God was very clear on how much He wants us to give back to Him in thanksgiving. He says, "*Give me back the first fruits of your labors, the first 10%.*"

We need to be united in **our support** of this Church and **I'm** right there with you!

I tithe to the Church every week. You see, I'm under **the same command** as you ... to give back to God the **first fruits** of **my income**.

Actually, I've registered with **Faith Direct** and my Tithe is automatically taken out of my bank account ... it is **the first bill I pay** ...

and I don't have to worry about writing a check or carrying cash.

I hope you will explore **this method** for yourself.

Do you need **another good reason** to **tithe**?

In the Book of **Malachi** God says, "*bring the whole tithe*" into the Church?

He goes on, "*Try me in this: Shall I not open for you the floodgates of heaven, to pour down blessing upon you without measure?*"

See, when you tithe, **God** comes right back and dispenses more blessings on you. God will not be outdone in **generosity**. He will lavish us with even **more blessings**.

We thank Him ... and **He** blesses us for thanking Him!

I can't imagine doing without **God's blessings**. They're available to **all**.

My request is that after hearing these ideas that you will take the practice of **Tithing to prayer** and consider how you will respond to **God's command** to give Him **the first fruits** of your labors.

This week all **Parishioners** will receive a **letter from me** and a **blank Pledge card**.

Please pray and fill out your Pledge Card and bring it to **Mass next week**, where you will bring forward and place it at **the Altar** your Pledge for **2015!**

Please show only the amount that you will give to this parish. (not to Charities)

Realize that by **Canon Law**, all Catholics are required to be registered in a **Parish Church**. There are *New Parishioner forms* available. Please do this.

Tithing is not dependent on whether you like the **Church**, the **Priest**, the **homilies**, the **singing**, or the **people** or **how much money** we need.

Tithing is based on God's command to give Him back the **first fruits** of our labors.

Here is how the money that you tithe to this Parish is used:

1. **Operational** Expenses: staff, bulletin, printing, utilities, maintenance
2. **Program** Expenses: RCIA, PSR, Adult ED, Retreats, Missions.
3. **Savings** for future needs:
 - a. **New buildings, structures, equipment, repairs**

You don't need to worry about **how we use your tithe**.

We have a **Parish Council** and a **Finance Council** to oversee our spending
I'm more careful with your money than I am with my own.

God is the **giver** of **all that we have and are**. He gives us our **life**, our **health**, our **faith**, our **intellect**, our **abilities**, our **jobs** and He asks for us to demonstrate our **gratitude** by giving Him **10%** of what we earn ... and we get to keep 90%.

The **weekly collection** is **an important part** of **the Mass** because ...

it's where we fulfill **God's plan** for funding His Church.

Please come to Mass and **please give** your part in the Collection.

Another benefit of the **5% 5% split** is that it leaves room for those **6 second collections** that we know are coming through the year for things like:

Home Missions, Propagation of the Faith, Church in Latin America, etc

Contributions to those needs can easily come out of the **5%** set aside for **charities**.

There are **similarities** and **differences** between
St. Elizabeth Ann Seton / St. Henry and **Jim ‘N Nick’s**

They are in **the business** of nourishing **bodies**

We are in **the business** of nourishing **souls**

But we are both **businesses ...**

and we both need money to continue to nourish people.

We ask you to do **what you do** at **Jim ‘N Nick’s**
and **pay the bill ...**

and **if you** want to throw in a little more as a tip ... that’ll be great.

You can get **Pork, Chicken, Turkey** and **Beef Brisket** at **Jim ‘N Nick’s ...**
but you can’t get ... lamb ... the Lamb of God!

That’s what we have here ... the **Bread of Life ...** the **Lamb of God**

And we promise that you will leave here every time **perfectly satisfied ...**
after being fed with **God’s word** and **God’s Sacrament.**

Let’s all follow **God’s Plan** and **Tithe ...**

giving **5% of our income** to this **Church**

and **5% of our income** to the **Charities** of our choice.

God will be so pleased ... and we’ll be so blessed!