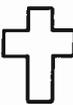


**The Parish Family of**  
**ST. THOMAS THE APOSTLE**  
**60 Byrd Avenue, Bloomfield, N.J. 07003**

**“GOD’S PLAN FOR GIVING”**  
**I**





## FROM THE PASTOR

I want to thank WILLIAM MCLAUGHLIN and THERESA NOWGRUCHES for taking the time from their families to be with us today and to share their personal feelings and experiences. I know you will be inspired--as I have been. For quite some time I have been most concerned about parish income and expenses. Parish income which has remained relatively stable and parish expenses which continue to climb with the inflation rate. It became clear that our needs would be ongoing and permanent. The solution would also have to be ongoing and permanent, and should involve a religious commitment on the part of every parishioner. Fund raisers on the market today cannot adequately answer our needs.

I would like to present to you today "God's Plan For Giving." When God the Father created the world, He set up His plan for its continued existence. This plan provides for the continuation of His teachings and spiritual influence. His plan provides for the continuance of brick, stone and wood for His churches and schools, for it is there that His teachings are guarded and passed on to new generations of faithful. It is in such buildings that the community can come together and worship. The bible refers to God's plan many, many times and God Himself gave His plan a name--He called it TITHING.

**"Each year you shall tithe all the produce that grows in the field you have sown."  
(Deuteronomy 14:22)**

The practice of tithing goes back to Abraham, the Father of the Chosen People. It was a practice sacred to Jacob and became an established law under Moses through the prophets. Undoubtedly, Jesus many times saw Joseph and Mary pay their tithes regularly.

I sincerely hope and pray that you will listen to the facts about the program today and next week, and discover for yourselves that, while tithing can solve our financial problems, the spiritual rewards for you and for the parish far outweigh that consideration. As you Pastor, I am sure that you will realize that a healthy spiritual climate in the parish is my first concern, indeed, the first concern of all priests here at St. Thomas the Apostle Church.

### NOW WHAT IS A TITHE?

A tithe is the first tenth of a wage earner's income. It is giving back to God something He gave in the first place. Tithing is not any tenth of one's income. It is the first tenth of one's income from any source--salary, dividends, interest--income from any source.

### HOW DOES THE 10% WORK?

Five percent of one's income is given to God through the parish church. The other 5% is for outside the parish and includes collections and assessments called for by the Bishop, school tuition, care of one's parents, or private charities like the Cancer Society or Heart Societies or Missionary Societies for which you may have a special love or interest.

**The spirit of tithing is the most important part of the program.** It means giving to God because He is God. Christ condemned the Pharisee who reminded God in his prayer that he tithed on all that he possessed. He was condemned by Christ because he was giving from a motive of pride or vanity. The tithe is not given to me, your Pastor, or to the Church. It is given to God so that His work can be continued through His Church. Tithing is giving to the point of sacrifice. That's why the word "**sacrificial**" appears on your weekly offering envelopes. The word sacrifice means to make holy, and the tithe that is given is made holy to God. The spirit of tithing means not caring what anyone else gives. It is between you and God.

Some people in the parish are already tithing. Many others are probably very close to the ideal tithe. Our senior parishioners and parents with children in Catholic schools will have to make accommodations according to their circumstances. But, I encourage all to accept tithing as a guide in forming your conscience.

When we tithe we are saying to God "**Thank You, God, for letting me use the other nine-tenths.**" Can we honestly deny Him the first fruits of our labors?

### WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS TO THE PARISH AND THE TITHER?

Every parish that has adopted God's plan for church support has improved its spiritual and material condition. Tithing implies a promise on NO SECOND COLLECTION except those prescribed by the Bishop for Assessments or certain national collections, e.g., Peter's Pence or the Propagation of the Faith. It means one collection at the offertory of the Mass with the true spirit of offering oneself with the offering of Christ.

And for the INDIVIDUAL...tithing tells us exactly what God considers a fair share. It lets us know WHAT to give. More important for the tither, however, is the spiritual transformation it produces. It helps to establish a proper sense of values. It helps us to remember that God comes first--before everything else, and that everything that we have comes from Him.

Having said all this, the question now may be asked, "**What do you do now**". The answer is that right now you do nothing. No one will call on you. You will not be asked to sign anything. Just come again next week, not only to honor God, but to listen to the rest of God's plan for giving. In the meantime, seek God's will in this matter by earnest prayer.

The true purpose of tithing is to secure not the tithe, but the tither; not the gift, but the heart of the giver.

**THERESA NOWGRUCHES, St Peter's, Belleville,**



My name is Thersa Nowgruches. I am from St. Peter's Parish in Belleville, our parish has been tithing almost three years.

I first heard about tithing from two parishioners from another parish who came to talk to us about it--like I am to you today.

They said--tithing is God's plan to support His church. 10% of your gross income to God that is...5% to your church, 5% to the charity of your choice. God gives us everything. We give Him back our tithes.

To me it seemed impossible financially. I just about make it each month. I can't ad any more to my Sunday offering. Let others do it. I can't.

After a couple of weeks,I read this in the church bulletin--"Let not your hand be open to recieve and clenched when time to give."

It's true--my hands are ready to receive from God. Give me, give me, God, but for me to give to God, well..

I thought it over. It's true. I give very little to my church and more to myself.

I will try to tithe, and so I did--and still am today and am very happy about it.

Before tithing it was me, myself, and I. God was last. Now after tithing it's God #1, and others and myself.

God has blessed me and my family in many ways.

I believe in Him and His work. I want His church to go on. I will not live forever. My faith is precious to me, I want to pass it on...pass on Jesus Christ.

In Italy, after WW II, a soldier was looking thru the rubble of a church. He noticed a statue of Christ, half buried, under debris. He cleared away the rubble and was surprised to see that the figure of Christ had no hands. There was an inscription at the base of the statue, it read; "You are my Hands."

Yes, you and I are the hands of Christ. We give and Christ's hands reach out to others.

The church stands today because of those before us --- it must stand tomorrow because of you and me. "Jesus Christ, yesterday, today and always." God will not be outdone in generosity. Believe me!

This summer I was quite sick with a rare virus for about six weeks, then I had to have a back operation. I was out of work from July to the middle of September. How will I survive? I wrote to Blue Cross not expecting too much back. But after a couple of weeks I received a check from Blue Cross, more than I expected. My sister needed a job ---today she has a job and much more. Thank God!

Yes, God gives me more than I give Him. Try Tithing! 5% to God...for His church,5% to those in need. Jesus says, "**Seek first the Kingdom of God and all other things will be added on.**" Trust God and let Him handle your life. He will be there when you least expect Him.

May God bless each of you and may you experience "How good is the Lord."

Thank you!



## BILL MC LAUGHLIN



My name is Bill McLaughlin from most Blessed Sacrement Parish in Franklin Lakes. I've been asked to speak to you today about God's Plan for Giving or tithing and tell you how successful it has been in our parish. I guess what I want to tell you about first, though, is how I reacted when tithing was first introduced to us. I was a member of the Parish Council when a parishioner came to me and encouraged us to present tithing as a plan for giving to our church. It wasn't exactly an idea that sparked the majority of the council to any great action. Most of us really didn't believe it would work, but we didn't really have much to lose either. Our parish was in big financial trouble and another dance, another Christmas Fair or another Fashion Show wasn't going to be the answer either. The margin of profit after expenses just didn't do much to meet our debt and the only ones who seemed to gain from them were the caterers and concessionaires.

I listened to a presentation at a council meeting and can't say I was really impressed by that either. It just sounded too idealistic, too far fetched and most of all, I felt I couldn't afford to do it. It was pie in the sky.

The Sunday that tithing was presented to the Parish at every Mass was really the first time I began to take it seriously. Several things that were said that morning really interested me and coming home from Church my wife and I began to consider it. We started talking about how much we spent on chance books and dance tickets and things like that in the past year.

One of the promises at our Parish was that all fund raisers would be eliminated – we began to reflect on how good God had been to us and question whether or not we owed Him first consideration on our finances. That made me nervous. We always considered the bank had first call on our money to cover the mortgage and after that came the gas company, electric company, telephone company and charge cards--Church donations were basically given out of leftovers and most times there wasn't much left over. We had tried to be pretty consistent about our Sunday envelopes but the amount in them didn't come too close to the 5% of our income that tithing demanded we give to our Parish and our donations and our tuitions didn't cover the other 5% to be given to charity. It would require a real adjustment to give God 10% off the top and put our other bills in God's hand. It seemed to me to be more likely that we'd be putting them in a bill collector's hands. We decided to go ahead and at least try it for awhile. One of the things we heard that Sunday morning was that God would return to us tenfold everything we gave to Him. That was really tempting but I was a little short in trust in that department. Another thing we heard was that tithing wasn't really a new idea. It's mentioned many times in the Bible both in the Old and New Testaments. My favorite quote is from Genesis when Jacob promises God that in return for God's help he would give back 10% of everything God gave to him – that really explains tithing to me –it is merely giving back to God only 10% of the 100% He gives to me.

Personally since we've been tithing our financial picture has done nothing but improve – several big bonuses and recently I became a partner in the firm where I work.

Our family relationships are more solid than ever – even with our 17 year old, which is an accomplishment these days, and our ability to trust in God even when things look really bleak has become very comforting to us.

As for our Parish – we officially began tithing on February 1, 1977 and at that time we were badly in debt – Sunday collections ran about \$2,400 a week – we had no Church (we worshipped in the school auditorium for many years) and many people were leaving our Parish because they despaired that we would ever have a church – it's difficult to feel inspired by a Mass said under a basketball hoop.

Today – 3½ years later – our collections run over \$5,000 a week – we are in the process of completing our Church Building, a building that has been built by cash pledges and is totally debt free and our fellow parishioners are united in spirit as we hadn't been before.

In conclusion I can say that it is my opinion that Tithing has certainly worked in our Parish and recommend highly that you put your trust in God and try God's Plan for Giving – TITHING.

Thank you very much

