

February 5, 2023

Generosity is an act of love

To give is to acknowledge God's ownership of all that we possess. To give generously makes it possible for the Church to accomplish its purposes, vision and mission. As stewards, managers, or overseers of what God has provided for our life, we are accountable to God for all that has been placed into our life, not just for a portion of the amount. **Our giving must always be an act of love, worship and gratitude.** When giving is a response to grace, it is always with gratitude and generosity.

Paul stated this principle in this way, *"For if the eagerness is there, the gift is acceptable according to what one has - not according to what one does not have."* (2 Corinthians 8:12) Again he said, *"Each of you must give as you have made up your mind, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver."* (2 Corinthians 9:7). No one should determine the amount of another person's gift. Each person or household is challenged to seek God's will in determining a personal giving commitment.

In the Old Testament people came to worship with a sacrifice in hand. The word "sacrifice" can be defined as "to set apart" or "to make holy." Sacrificial giving is the act of making sacred, or setting apart, our financial resources for God. A sacrificial gift is, as one person put it, "the giving of something I value for someone I value more." Examples of sacrificial giving? The Widow; the boy and his lunch; and the woman with the alabaster jar. God measures your gift, not in relationship to others, but in relationship to your resources and in what is left over after the gift. *"Given this, all giving to a capital campaign must be over and above regular giving."* (*I Chron 29:3*)

The Corinthian Christians were challenged to "purpose in their heart that which they should give and to follow through by giving that faithfully." A capital campaign is an organized way to receive personal commitments. Personal commitments are statements of intention. A campaign provides a way to register the purpose of your heart to give over a defined period of time. A genuine giving commitment should be marked by prayer, generosity, even sacrifice, and faith.

We often say "there are no silent witnesses and no secret disciples." We should also say there are no secret stewards or givers. Giving as described in the Bible is personal but not private. King David witnessed to "all the congregation of Israel" what he was giving to build the temple (*I Chron 29:10*). He appealed to the people to make a similar sacrificial gift. He could not honestly ask the people to sacrifice until he was able to say what he had already given or committed himself. Like King David as spiritual leader of Holy Family Parish, I was among the first to make my sacrificial gift to Living our Faith – Building our Future Campaign.

Since success depends on widespread involvement, King David organized the Israelites in a way that enabled this to occur. Everyone had the opportunity to participate in working and giving in the campaign to build the temple. In the same way, in Exodus 35 the building of the tabernacle was accomplished because of the massive involvement of people with individual gifts and abilities. A successful Capital Campaign involves a large portion of the congregation in the organizational structure of the program. When people are involved, they become members of an enthusiastic team and develop a greater commitment for the project. They also learn basic biblical principles of generosity, receive personal encouragement, develop supportive relationships, and share their talents and abilities with others.

As Jesus said, *"From everyone to whom much has been given, much will be required."* (*Luke 12:48*). I invite you answer this call to stewardship by becoming involved in the Capital Campaign. As you become advocates of the cause, you will be more willing to give for its fulfillment and success with both your time and treasure!

With gratitude,
Fr. Laszlo Nagy
Pastor