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Tithing: Time and Talent

BY ANGELA KRESS, CAMPUS INTERN

“For where your treasure is, there also will your heart be.” ~Matthew

What Is Tithing?

Old Testament

“Tithing is the practice, established by God in the Old Testament, of returning 10% of your blessings to God. Originally the tithe was given to the temple or the Church in the form of produce or livestock, since this really was the only income that the people had. As our society shifted from a barter-based system of trade to a

monetary exchange system, the tithe began to be paid in currency. Whether one gave monetary income or profit from the fields was really not as important as it was for the believer to understand that the tithe was what was owed to God. The tithe was not given based on the needs of the priests, of the Church or of the poor. It was given simply in recognition and gratitude for the blessings that God had bestowed on the individual. Thus, every believer had a need to tithe to God.” (archstl.org)

New Testament

“While tithing is not specifically mentioned in the New Testament but Jesus actually called his followers to a standard of giving that went far beyond the tithe. He called us to give up **everything** and follow Him. The early Christians were able to do this. However, as the Church expanded throughout the world its followers needed to be reminded that generous giving is a hallmark of the Judeo-Christian tradition. The Church Council of Macon in 585 A.D. ordered payment of tithes. In the 8th century, Charlemagne made tithing to the Church a civil law. The Council of Trent (1545-1563) also reiterated the call to tithe.” (archstl.org)

“The tithes of the herd and the flock shall be determined by ceding to the Lord as sacred every tenth animal as they are counted by the herdsman’s rod.” - Leviticus 27:32

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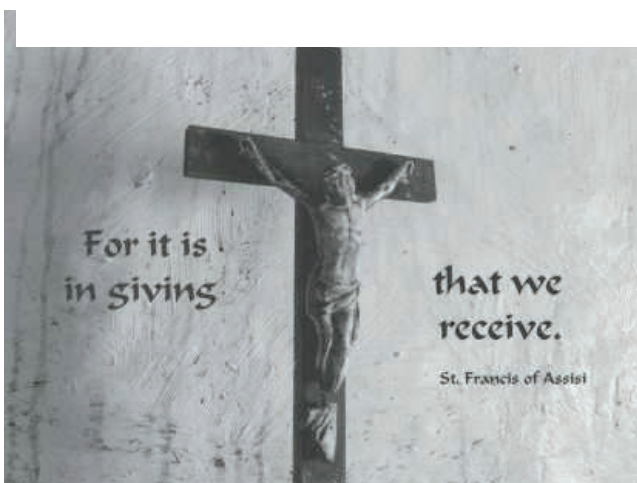
Is tithing still necessary today?

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“Tithing is absolutely still necessary in the Catholic Church today. When God introduced the concept of the tithe in the Old Testament He told the Israelites this contribution was necessary from them to support the work of the Levites and the poor in the community. Today our Church still needs our support to pay the expenses and financial obligations it incurs as it operates in a commercial society. Salaries, benefits, insurance, maintenance, utilities and service fees are all expenses that never even existed when Our Lord first decreed that each of us was to give back a percentage of what we have. Additionally, we are still called to care for the poor among us.” (archstl.org)

“Each year you shall tithe all the produce that grows in the field you have sown...so that the Levite who has no share in the heritage with you and also the alien, the orphan and the widow who belong to your community, may come and eat their fill so that the Lord your God may bless you in all that you undertake.”

• *Deuteronomy 14:22, 29*



As a student am I exempt from tithing?

“Our Lord exempted no one from giving. In the story of the “Widow’s Mite” it is important to note that He did not reach into the Offering box and give the widow back her two small coins. When He multiplied the Loaves and Fishes He asked for all the food that anyone had. Even the Levites or priests of the Old Testament were not exempt from the tithe. Today, although many parishioners are unaware of it, many religious give back a percentage of their own small salaries to the parishes in which they serve.” (archstl.org)

“Give the Levites these instructions: When you receive from the Israelites the tithe I have assigned you from them as your heritage, you are to make a contribution from them to the Lord, a tithe of the tithes...” - Numbers 18:26

While tithing is traditionally thought of in terms of monetary income we have many other forms of blessings as well. God made the world and all that is in it, therefore everything we have ultimately comes from God. Our lives, our families, our health, our education, our unique talents and skills, our job and our income are all blessings from God. Our generosity can also come in the forms of volunteering our time and skills.

“Tell the rich in the present age not to be proud and not to rely on so uncertain a thing as wealth but rather on God, who richly provides us with all things for our enjoyment. Tell them to do good, to be rich in good works, to be generous, ready to share, thus accumulating as treasure a good foundation for the future, so as to win the life that is true life.” - 1 Timothy 6:17-19

Ways to Tithe your time and talents might include...

- **Tutoring kids**
- **Volunteering at a shelter/food bank**
- **Helping at Mass**
- **Volunteer to be an RCIA sponsor**
- **Spend some time at a senior citizen home**
- **Share your photographer skills by taking photos for your parish or a local charity**
- **Going on a service trip**

What if I don't have time to give?

*“Honor the Lord with your wealth, with first fruits of all your produce; then will your barns be filled with grain, with new wine your vats will overflow.”
- Proverbs 3:9-10*

The short answer is you don't have time because you don't make time. After all, God should come before homework shouldn't He? By placing God first – above all other financial obligations – we show how much we love and trust Him.

Even if giving a full tithe (5% to the Church & 5% to other charities) is not immediately possible for you, it is important to work towards this goal. You can begin by committing to giving a gift that is planned, proportionate and sacrificial. Most Catholics do not even know how much they give back. When they take the time to calculate that amount they are often surprised and discomfited. We often think we are very generous yet despite the strong urging throughout sacred scripture to give back 10%, the average Catholic today gives less than

How do I get started?

- **Set a goal** (Aim to volunteer 3 hours a week or donate 10% of your income (5% to the Church and 5% to other charities)
- **Start small** (Start by committing a few hours a month to volunteering and gradually increase the time. Calculate the percentage you give now and aim to increase that amount by 1/2% each year)
- **Take inventory of your talents** (What are you good at? What gifts has God blessed you with and how are you sharing them?)
- **Sign up for an ongoing program** (I found that it is much easier to commit to an ongoing commitment like tutoring every Monday nights at 7pm than it is to just volunteer every now an then randomly)
- **Talk to a campus minister!** (If you are unsure of how your time and talents could best be shared, campus minister might be able to help give guidance and direction)
 - Linda Domeyer (domeyer@washucsc.org)
To learn about ways to give financially
 - Cynthia Enghauser (enghauser@washucsc.org)
To get involved in community outreach and service
 - Mark Zaegel (Zaegel@washucsc.org)
To learn about ways to volunteer with Mass and Liturgy

Where Can I Learn More About Tithes?

<http://archstl.org/stewardship/page/faqs-about-tithing>
Philip Lenahan, Finances for Today's Catholic Family (Temecula, CA: Financial Foundations for the Family, 1996)
www.focusequip.org (Discover>The Catholic Life > Virtue > Stewardship: Loving God with our Time Talent, and Treasure)



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