

The McKenna Tithing Newsletter

The Gerry McKenna Tithing Program is a grass-roots ministry - conducted and administered by laymen and women - for the purpose of sharing the joy and peace of mind that accompanies the ancient practice of tithing.

WINTER 1995

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TENDING AND NOURISHING . . .

It's a special gift you've brought to your parish...tithing. And it needs nourishing and cultivating. Parishes change and many people have still never heard of it as a Catholic practice.

AND SO IT GROWS...

The McKenna Tithing Program has been introduced into **632** parishes in **18** States and **32** dioceses with **344** Updates.

As people in your parish move away and new parishioners take their places, your tithing parish can slowly and subtly change...almost without your noticing. Also the good folks who are still there and faithfully contributing their tithe each week can certainly use a "booster shot" now and again. And the children who weren't really listening the first time are a bit older now and they're the Church's future.

Seventeen years of experience with many wise pastors have taught us that there are signs to watch for that signal it's time for an injection of enthusiasm. The numbers you list in your bulletin - Offertory giving this year compared with last year - are exciting the first year. But soon you're comparing a tithing year with a tithing year. Usually it increases for a while, but will level off eventually. When those two numbers are very close, it's time to do an **Update**.

An **Update** can be done one of two ways:

- 1 - We'll come and talk to you and supply the witnesses; or
- 2 - We'll come and talk to you and you supply the witnesses.

We strongly recommend the second method - at least for your first Update - and, again, experience and pastors have taught us why:

A - We suggest you enlist two parishioners for each Mass. You then have your parish hearing their neighbors saying how much tithing means to them. They've heard strangers; now they're hearing people they know.

B - When you do your mailing, each household is getting to read talks from 10 or 12 of their neighbors. (Hmmm... a lot of people must be tithing. I know he's been out of work. And they have eight children. Hmmm...)

We'll happily provide our witnesses or come and talk to you and your new witnesses. We'll provide some suggestions on how to choose the people to enlist. (Naturally you don't want to refer to income and percentages.) We've found that an **Update** with your witnesses usually results in a greater increase in Offertory giving. Not the whole point, but a significant one. But however you do it - your people or ours - don't let it wither. Do an **Update!** Call us today at 201/540-1305.

THE CHEERFUL GIVERS

(Please feel free to use these comments in your bulletins.)

PARISHIONERS' COMMENTS...

"I have often wondered why some other religions typically tithe and Catholics do not. Now I know we do! I think it is a good thing to do. I will tithe from my household expenses each month and I will pray that tithing will be a success at St. Joan's."

A parishioner
Rev. Msgr. Leo Bierster
St. Joan of Arc, Hershey, PA

"I can't give much but there are a few things I can do without. After all, who deserves it more than the Lord?"

A parishioner
Rev. James T. Smith
St. Kevin's,, Flushing, NY

"We make a living by what we earn, but we make a life by what we give."

A parishioner
Rev. William Vouk
St. Anthony, Albany, MN

"I think the tithing program is going to be great for St. Maurice and I am wholeheartedly going to participate. Tithing is giving me a great way to repay Our Lord for the many blessings and graces He has given me in a way I would not have thought of. It is hard to measure gratitude in figures and for that matter in words, but I feel that with tithing, whatever sacrifices I make will help. Thanks for giving me the opportunity."

A parishioner
Rev. Jerry Devore
St. Maurice, Stamford, CT

"I began tithing with some anxiety but quickly discovered that God has multiplied His blessing to me each time I fulfill this commitment to give my first 10% to God."

A parishioner
Rev. Joseph Hilbert
St. Francis Xavier, Gettysburg, PA

"It's an honor and a privilege to participate in this humble way. Thank you."

A parishioner
Rev. Richard Guastella
Holy Rosary, Staten Island, NY

"Years ago I practically resented giving money to the Church and I gave only a token amount. Now I realize that God's work is important and that giving is a beautiful thing and a sign of my love for God and others. Now I would feel bad if I gave too little, if I didn't do my part, or if I was stingy compared to the needs of the Church and our world family."

A parishioner
Rev. Donald Kramberg
Holy Name, Ausable Forks, NY

"Tell anyone who is afraid to tithe or has doubts about it to take the plunge. You'll never regret it."

A parishioner
Rev. William Benonis
Notre Dame/Lourdes Swarthmore, PA

"Our income is not big, but we thank God for everything we have and try to give what we can to our beloved church. We will continue doing our best."

A parishioner
Rev. John Mahoney
Blessed Sacrament/Cypress Hills NY

"Sorry that I did not put a lot of money. P.S. I'm going to save money to buy my mother a welcome back card. She came from a trip." (Taken from a note in one of the children's envelopes.)

A (young) parishioner
Rev. John Mahoney
Blessed Sacrament/Cypress Hills NY

"The one gentleman's presentation on tithing from the Archdiocese quieted my anxiety. He said his wife makes out the checks for the month to the church as soon as the Social Security checks come in. I followed their example ever since we became a tithing parish. Believe me, it is a great feeling of relief. Our priorities are now in the right place and the bills somehow seem to get paid without the worries I always experienced before."

A parishioner
Rev. John Farley
 St. Peter's, Rosendale, NY

"We were not told 'we must give more' or that 'we should give more'. Our contribution increased because we felt it was right and good to do so."

A parishioner
Rev. Msgr. Walter Kenny
 St. Augustine, Larchmont, NY

"Tithing: it is fair and it is Biblical. The Lord is only asking us to give back a small portion of what was His originally."

A parishioner
Rev. William Stanton
 Seven Dolors, Wyndmoor, PA

"Tithing has grown on me as the year went along. I see it now as not just a benefit for our parish, but as a vital part of my own Christianity."

A parishioner
Rev. Kevin O'Donoghue
 St. Cecilia, Brooklyn, NY

"Giving a present to my Church was not part of my Christmas list, and yet after much hesitation I gave in my bonus gift from my job to the parish. Not only did I receive much this Christmas, but I was able to share my gifts with my Church and with others."

A parishioner
Rev. Msgr. Joachim Beaumont
 St. Elizabeth, Washington Heights, NY

"It was as a teenager that I began to take my

relationship with the Lord seriously. When I married, my husband and I began to talk about tithing, but it wasn't until later that we began to do so seriously. Ironically, at this time in our lives we were earning the least we ever had! I can't begin to share how the Lord honored and blessed our pittance!"

A parishioner
Rev. Msgr. Lawrence Hinch
 St. Teresa, Woodside, NY

"Several years ago, I found it hard to understand that a parish our size in this area would have such a low amount in the weekly collection. I started to pray about it and realized maybe I was part of the problem. Continuing to pray, I added 10% to 15% to what I had been giving. Eventually this seemed very comfortable so my offering became part of my prayers again. Another increase, another prayer and so on. When talk was starting about tithing earlier this year, I decided to wait and see how this would develop as my weekly offering was averaging between 6% and 7%. It was a relief to me when those fine gentlemen took time from their busy schedules to explain the overall tithing program. You see, the Lord guided me to exactly where I needed to be, and believe me, it's painless. Just sign me: A happy tithing member of the Nativity of Our Lord Parish."

A parishioner
Rev. William O'Donnell
 Nativity of Our Lord, Warminster, PA

PASTORS' COMMENTS...

(From their parish bulletins)

"Nobody pretends that generous giving on top of taxes and college and everything else is going to be easy. But that's all right. We are not challenged by what is easy. We are challenged by what is tough. We like to take the small company and make it big. We like to give enormous chunks of ourselves--10, 12 hours a day--to the challenge of our jobs. We can do as much for God."

Rev. Msgr. Walter Simmons, V.F.
 St. Peter of Alcantara, Port Washington, NY

"The commitment to tithing, made after great prayer, is a personal one. Once adopted, it allows a real sense of independence from the material world."

Rev. Hugh Grace

St. Mary of the Snow, Saugerties, NY

"It's hard to imagine God being overwhelmed but it's very likely that God is extremely touched by your trust in Him and your willingness to give back to Him something of what you have received."

Rev. Ronald Richardson

St. Joseph, Babylon, NY

[Following a report on the Offertory giving...]
"Thus we have entered this new year of 1995 with our Tithing Program continuing through your generous sacrificial giving. For this I am profoundly grateful and I pray that God will bless all of you. As we read in the proverbs according to the Prophet Haggai: 'Is it time for you to dwell in your own paneled houses, while this house lies in ruins?'"

Rev. Joseph Hickey

St. Francis Xavier, Bronx, NY

"Giving to God is what you do when you contribute to our Sunday collection. His Church is the immediate and visible recipient --but God is the person you are giving to."

Rev. William Belford

St. Catherine, Blauvelt, NY

DID YOU KNOW...?

* The McKenna Tithing Group celebrated in October at our Seventh Annual Day of Recollection. It was another lovely, inspiring day graced this year by the presence of Archbishop Emeritus Peter Leo Gerety of the Newark Archdiocese.

The day usually starts at 10:30 a.m., meeting and introducing new witnesses, and includes a morning session presided over by a pastor of a tithing parish. This year Msgr. Robert

Carroll of St. Nicholas in Passaic, NJ was kind enough to fill that role. After an informal lunch, the group traditionally gets together for brain-storming in the interest of making the program better.

Archbishop Gerety celebrated early-evening Mass and had lavish praise for the witnesses. A long-time supporter of the group, he noted the more than 600 parishes where tithing has been introduced and mentioned the impact it had especially in Newark when he was the Ordinary. He then graciously joined us for a cocktail hour and sumptuous dinner. Everything was capably prepared by the staff at Xavier Center of St. Elizabeth's College in Convent Station.

It's always a day marked by much laughter, inspiration, and--almost everyone agrees--a feeling of humility and gratitude at being part of such a group.

* We mentioned in the last issue that we had been invited to a parish in the St. Cloud Diocese of Minnesota. Well, we went and got a lovely, warm reception. (Yes, warm in both senses of the word... and in November, too!)

We've done (or have scheduled) a dozen parishes in the Archdiocese of Philadelphia, and in March we'll speak in a parish in Alpena, Michigan!

* We most sincerely thank the good pastors who make so much possible in this ministry. Your contributions and you beautiful letters of thanks are really what keep us going. You are the ones who make it possible for us to mail this newsletter and thereby share the message with other pastors, parishes and people. And did you see that number on page one? Six hundred and thirty-two parishes since 1977!! And we couldn't have done it without you.
