

During my 11 plus years here at Sacred Heart, I have received maybe 3 anonymous letters. When people send anonymous letters, of a critical nature, it's usually because they lack confidence in themselves, or they lack confidence in what they're writing, or they lack confidence in the one they're writing too --- like maybe they're afraid if I knew who wrote me such a thing I'd go over and land on them with both feet.

They were not poison pen letters, thank God. They just said I should not bring up money and church financial support in the homily during Mass. It's a plea I could never follow and have any respect for myself as a pastor. Money and what we do with it is a moral decision, and scripture scholars tell us Jesus talked about money and wealth and to use them justly and charitably more than he talked about any other single moral issue.

Beyond the fact that this is Stewardship of Treasure Sunday in our parish, why am I doing this, when everyone knows I'll be moving off to another part of my life come next June, so why not let things coast.

There are three reasons:

1. I love Sacred Heart parish, and I want it and its ministries and spirituality not just to survive, or maintain but to grow and thrive.
2. I love Salinas, and this town needs at its center a Catholic parish pulsating with the vision and spirit of Jesus so people can find relief, take heart, deal with stuff and feast on beautiful sacraments in a beautiful place.
3. I love you. I want you to grow in holiness. And I want you to practice justice towards God by how you use a portion of the material wealth God has given you.

What am I asking? Two things. 1. In regard to the collection, that you look at what you give, and if it's not a tithe (10 %), and especially if it's not in 5 city blocks of a tithe ... that you increase your weekly offering. Increase your offering, if it's called for, and make it stable and a part of your life by automatic withdrawal --- that's doing some paperwork so your offering comes, regular as clockwork, every week or month, from your savings or checking or credit card. The (yellow?) forms are in the pews and you can fill one out now, or part of one and the office will call you at home and get the other information. Or take the form home, but not let it die the death of many forms that are taken at home.

And, #2. I'm asking that every adult here make Sacred Heart parish a beneficiary in your will or trust. Often people of normal means can't give large gifts to the church. But wouldn't it be wonderful if the last financial act of your life was to practice a stewardship of financial thanks to God. Some leave an actual 10 %, off the top.

Others, some set amount. It needs to be something, of course, a person would clear with the children. You should know that a major reason for our parish's vitality these last years has been bequests from a Mr. Cislini, a Fr. Sanz, a Dorothy Franci or Fran McFadden. The green paper in your pew has information. And yes, you will be hearing more about this later.

I take heart, talking to you about money today, from great examples in the readings. Moses wasn't going to stop interceding with hands raised until the battle was won. St. Paul commands Timothy to proclaim what needs to be proclaimed when convenient or inconvenient, with encouragement or even reprimands. And the stubborn widow will not stop pestering until the judge acts justly.