

SACRIFICIAL GIVING:
A Small Parish's Stewardship Success Story

Presented by
Charlotte Bruney, Pastoral Administrator of St. Vincent de Paul Church, Churchville
and
Joe Dombrowski, St. Vincent de Paul Trustee and a member of St. Vincent's initial
Sacrificial Giving Committee

Parish phone: 585-293-1400 or e-mail cstvince@dor.org

The Prayer of a Good Steward

My church is composed of people like me. I help to make it what it is. It will be friendly, if I am. Its pews will be filled, if I help fill them. It will do great work, if I work. It will make generous gifts to many causes, if I am a generous giver. It will bring other people into its worship and fellowship, if I invite and bring them. It will be a church of loyalty and love, of fearlessness and faith, and a church with a noble spirit, if I, who make it what it is, am filled with these same things. Therefore, with the help of God, I shall dedicate myself to the task of being all the things I want my church to be. Amen."

References

Stewardship: An Everyday Way of Life! Calendar is produced by Midwest Printing & Promotions. Phone: 1-800-754-5190 or on the web at www.midwestpp.com

What Should I Give My Parish: A Catholic Approach to Stewardship by Mitch Finley, a Living Faith Publication, available through Creative Communications for the Parish, Phone: 1-800-325-9414 or on the web at www.creativecommunications.com

Stewardship: A Disciple's Response, the U.S. bishops' pastoral letter, is available on line at www.usccb.org/stewardship/

St. Vincent de Paul Church
P.O Box 609, Churchville, NY 14428



To: Generous Givers

May, 2009

«Mail_to»
«House_Number» «Street_Name» «Apartment__Name»
«City», «State» «Zip_Code»

Dear «Salutation»,

Happy Easter, again and again! First of all, let me sincerely thank you again for your consistent and generous financial support of your parish. As you well know, St. Vincent de Paul Church depends on your generosity to sustain its numerous ministries and service to the community in which it lives and grows. But there's an even more important reason to support the church. It springs from a deep well of gratitude to God for every gift you have been given. It is born of the realization that everything you have and *are* is a gift from God.

"As each one has received a gift, use it to serve one another as good stewards of God's varied grace."

Because you are indeed good stewards, I know I don't have to say much to motivate you to make a new pledge to St. Vincent de Paul parish for the fiscal year which begins on July 1st. I am also well aware that in today's society, many needs compete for your generosity. Thanks for recognizing that the church is not just "another charity"! Supporting the work of Jesus' church is critical to its existence and mission, and is one of the most important responsibilities we have as Christian stewards. Even though there are many in the parish who take their parish membership for granted and give very little of their time, talent and treasure in return, I am well aware of your commitment to St. Vincent de Paul Church and am appreciative of it. Honestly, we couldn't do it without you! May God continue to bless you abundantly.

Sacrificial giving is a commitment that sometimes hurts. In the throes of an economic crisis, it is indeed both a leap of faith and a genuine sacrifice to give of your first fruits, trusting that God will be faithful to his promise to help the faithful find *"ample means in yourselves to meet each and every situation, with enough to spare for every good cause."* (2 Corinthians 9:8). Know that your parish joins you in this faith walk, giving an amount equal to 3% of our offertory collection to needs outside our parish *FIRST* before we even worry about our own needs. We make that commitment and we ask you to do the same with regard to your household budget.

It may interest you to learn that an increasing number of parishioners are using automatic debits from their checking accounts to regularly make their contribution without having to think about it on Sunday morning. To do so monthly, for example, may take some of the pressure off of you if you're not able to be with us every Sunday. You then will be able to rest assured that your parish is receiving your support. Please contact your bank if this sounds like a good idea to you.

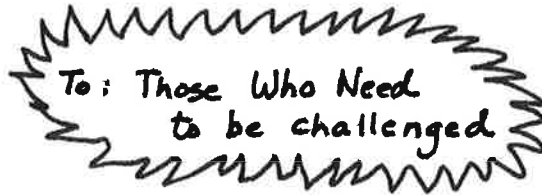
I ask you to please use the form on the back of this page to make your sacrificial gift pledge for the fiscal year **July 1, 2009 through June 30, 2010**. Knowing what we may expect in terms of monetary support helps us to create a responsible budget for the new fiscal year. We would appreciate hearing from you by **May 24th, 2009**. You may mail or deliver the pledge form to the parish office or simply drop it into the offertory basket at Mass. Your prompt response will eliminate the necessity and cost of a follow-up letter or phone call. Thank you for this consideration.

With profound gratitude,

Charlotte M. Bruney, Pastoral Administrator



St. Vincent de Paul Church
P.O Box 609, Churchville, NY 14428



May, 2009

«Mail_to»
«House_Number» «Street_Name» «Apartment_Name»
«City», «State» «Zip_Code»

Dear «Salutation»,

What does it mean to belong to a parish? One's parish is usually the first place, outside of home, where one learns of God's love, and it is the place one returns to when a new member is born into our household, when that same little one is ready to celebrate other sacraments, when adult children wish to be married, and when a family member is ill or has died. It is *in* community that we come to understand what following the Lord Jesus means, that we learn that we need one another for support and encouragement in living the Christian life. But belonging brings with it responsibility. It is a "give and take" *relationship*.

In biblical times, God's holy people were asked to *tithe*, that is, to give 10% of their earnings back to God out of sheer gratitude for their own many blessings. These tithes were used to support the priests, and the "widows and orphans", i.e., those who had no other means of support. Today the church uses your gifts to do much the same. Your offerings pay the salaries of those who minister to you and your family, provides for the maintenance and upkeep of your parish buildings and equipment, subsidizes the religious education of our children and continuing faith formation of the adult members of our community, and are used to aid those in need.

I realize that in today's society, many needs compete for our generosity. But the church is not just "another charity". No, supporting the church is **one of the most important responsibilities we have as Christians**, critical to its very existence and mission. These are tough economic times and it is indeed a sacrifice to give of your first fruits, trusting that God will be faithful to his promise to help the faithful find "*ample means in yourselves to meet each and every situation, with enough to spare for every good cause.*" (2 Corinthians 9:8). Know that your parish joins you in this faith walk, giving an amount equal to 3% of our offertory collection to needs outside our parish **FIRST** before we even worry about our own needs. We make that commitment and we ask you to do the same with regard to your household budget.

It is a sad truth that less than half of the registered households in our parish provide over 80% of its financial support. Another sad truth is that if every registered household made some sort of tithe – say 3% of their net wages –our parish would *easily* make our budget and could save toward other goals, such as providing handicap accessibility to our parish hall, for example. But nearly 180 of our registered families donate less than \$100 to St. Vincent's in the course of an entire calendar year. This is not just.

Today I ask you frankly to reflect on your household budget: Do you spend more on cable TV, internet access, text messaging or fast food than you do toward the work of the Lord? If you are not able to join other parishioners in giving at least 3% of your income to St. Vincent's, may we suggest you begin taking small steps forward to make the support of your parish a little higher on your priority list. Perhaps you can start by offering your first hour's salary to the church each week. Or maybe even the "minimum wage"?

We call this annual appeal our "Sacrificial Giving Campaign". It is a response in love to Jesus' own great sacrifice for us. We pray that you will join the majority of St. Vincent's parishioners who do make personal financial sacrifices for the sake of the Gospel. Please take time in the next week to pray about your gift.

(over)

It may interest you to learn that an increasing number of parishioners are using automatic debits from their checking accounts to regularly make their contribution without having to think about it on Sunday morning. To do so monthly, for example, may take some of the pressure off of you if you're not able to be with us every Sunday. You then will be able to rest assured that your parish is receiving your support. Please contact your bank if this sounds like a good idea to you.

Using the form below, we sincerely ask you to make a sacrificial gift pledge for the new fiscal year **July 1, 2009 through June 30, 2010**, and return that pledge to us in the envelope provided. Knowing what we may expect in terms of monetary support helps us to create a responsible budget. We would appreciate hearing from you by **May 25th, 2009**. Your prompt response will eliminate the necessity and cost of a follow-up letter or phone call. Thank you for this consideration.

In your service,



Charlotte M. Bruney
Pastoral Administrator

PS To help you in planning your gift, know that since the fiscal year began last July 1st through the last Sunday in March, (the end of the third financial quarter), your recorded offertory contributions to St. Vincent de Paul Church totaled \$«YTD». Please complete return the form below to the parish in the envelope provided as soon as possible. You may mail it or drop it in the basket or bring it to the parish office.



St. Vincent de Paul Sacrificial Gift Pledge

For fiscal year July 1, 2009 – June 30, 2010

*Grateful to God for many blessings,
Committed to building up and strengthening our parish,
Aware of our responsibilities to needy neighbors everywhere,
We will use our weekly "Stewardship Means Sharing" envelopes,
or mail a check weekly, monthly, quarterly or annually
to make donations toward this pledge,
our sacrificial gift to our parish for the coming year:*

Total Pledge for the year 2009-2010 is \$ _____

(Recommended offering goal is 3% of your net income.)

Signature: _____

«Env» «Family_Name»



MIDYEAR UPDATE
FOR
SACRIFICIAL GIVERS

St. Vincent de Paul Church, 11 North Main Street, Churchville, NY 14428-0609
(585) 293-1400

January 28, 2009

«Mail_to»
«House_Number» «Street_Name» «Apartment__Name»
«City», «State» «Zip_Code»

Dear «Salutation»,

At this, the end of the seventh month of our fiscal year, I write to thank you again for your commitment to Sacrificial Giving, your faithfulness and generosity, especially in this most difficult economy. Your offertory gifts are our main support and we could not exist without that support. Thank you for your leadership in this effort.

For income tax purposes, we are enclosing with this note, a statement of your offertory gifts for calendar year 2008.

We also take this opportunity to update you with regard to your pledge of \$ «SG_0809», which was made for our fiscal year, July 1, 2008 through June 30, 2009. As of December 31, 2008, the halfway mark, we had received a total of \$«YTD» against that pledge, as credited to envelope #«Env». These are the monies received in the orange-bordered white weekly "Stewardship Means Sharing" envelopes, that is, for the regular weekend Mass collection; not included in this number are the special second collections or holy day envelopes. If your records still differ from ours on this score, please confer with our parish office manager (293-1400), and we will do our best to clear up the discrepancy.

We remind you that you may pay off your pledge weekly, monthly, or annually, at your convenience. Some have chosen to use regular electronic fund transfers from their checking accounts directly to the church to have their weekly gift received without having to think about it. If you like that idea, check out this option with your own bank.

Take the time to count your blessings. May 2009 be a kind year to all of us. May those in need be provided for. If for any reason, you will not be able to complete your pledge, please let me know. We thank you sincerely for all the support you can give to your parish.

Sincerely,

Charlotte M. Bruney
Pastoral Administrator



St. Vincent de Paul Church, 11 North Main Street, Churchville, NY 14428-0609
(585) 293-1400

January 28, 2009

«Mail_to»
«House_Number» «Street_Name» «Apartment_Name»
«City», «State» «Zip_Code»

Dear «Salutation»,

As a non-profit church corporation, the IRS asks us to provide our parishioners annually with a statement of contributions. As you will see from the enclosed statement, we have no record of contributions to St. Vincent de Paul Church from your household. This may be simply because you put loose cash in the basket when you come to church. If this is the case, we thank you for your donations. However, we would like to be able to provide you with an official record of contributions. That is not possible, however, if you are unwilling to identify your contributions. This could be done simply by using an envelope from home on which you can write your name and address, or call us and we would be happy to send you offertory envelopes. This will allow us to record your contributions for future reference. Some parishioners arrange to use an Electric Fund Transfer from their bank accounts so they will make their contribution regularly without having to think about it. If you like that idea, check out this option with your own bank.

We very much appreciate the fact that you wish to be part of our parish family. It takes many people to make our parish the successful community of faith that it is. But in order to we pass on the faith to our children and support the many ministries of our parish we need the help of every parishioner. I'm asking you to please consider making regular contributions to the life of our parish. [If you have joined another church or no longer wish to be considered parishioners of St. Vincent's, please call or e-mail us (cstvince@dor.org) so we can save the expense of mailings to your household in the future.]

Thank you for any support you may be giving your parish anonymously. We appreciate that very much, but we would be happy to help you make those contributions tax deductible by allowing us to record them.

Take the time to count your blessings. May this new year 2009 be kind to all of us.

Sincerely,

Charlotte M. Bruney
Pastoral Administrator