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**GOD'S PLAN  
TO SUPPORT  
HIS CHURCH**



**JENNINGS  
SULLIVAN  
MULLER**



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*God's Plan To  
Support His Church*

Jennings-Sullivan-Muller

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## Preface

by Rev. Joseph Jennings

WHEN God the Father created the world He set up a plan for its continued existence. Thus from the smallest insect through every grade and species of creation there is an ordered pattern for existence and survival. When God the Son established His Church, He likewise had a plan for its continued existence. To claim less would be an insult to Divine Wisdom and to our understanding of the mind of God.

This plan provides not merely for the survival of its teachings and spiritual influence but for its actual existence in brick and stone and wood. It is not merely a good thing but it is *necessary* that we find out what this plan is. It can and should be traced and known. It can be learned—and therefore taught—by those to whom the other commitments of the Deposit of Faith are given. The Bible refers to this plan as *tithing*.

On the occasion of the establishment of a new parish — the spreading further of the frontiers of Christ's Kingdom—it is necessary to make the people, then and there, aware of this plan. Their first concern in extending God's Kingdom is building their own parish. Four years ago when the Parish of St. Pius X, Mobile, was established the people sought to find and follow this plan. As pastor, I reviewed for them what the project involved.

From the outset, I was convinced—and I still remain convinced—that the work of God goes begging when it depends on a nefarious system of fund-raising gimmicks that have become the trademark of Catholic support, especially in America.

I am sure of one thing, that God never intended His Church to depend on the outcome of a raffle or a bingo game for its survival or advancement.

I cannot feel convinced of the need of professional schemes. Their growing network of fund-raising establishments is simply an indication of our own inability to reach the potential of which our people are capable.

These means of meeting church and school debts have sent many a pastor to an early grave and have often brought the blast of criticism rightfully on our heads. They are cold, earthy, uninspirational, unrewarding, irksome, tried and tired and inadequate. They exist because people have failed to learn their important part (or because we have failed to teach them the part) that God Himself expects them to play in this work.

We have been using the technique of always asking, of having appeal overlapping appeal with the result that the people feel burdened, not because of what they give, but with the manner of their giving.

I would never want a parishioner to feel a burden in his giving. I would not ask from anyone more than what God expects, but I will not settle for less.

In practice let us face these facts:

1. God's work is worth more than a mediocre effort.

2. It should be done not by the privileged few, nor by the surplus of the wealthy, but by every member according to his means.

3. There must be some way to define the limits of this obligation besides the broad interpretation of the Fifth Precept.

4. There is one way—and only one—that is mentioned in the Bible and that is *tithing*.

5. Tithing is mentioned forty-six times in the Scriptures.

The practice of tithing goes back to the time of Abraham and beyond. It was a sacred practice to Jacob. It became an established law under Moses. It was the reason for God's strong words through His Prophets, Aggeus and Malchias, when people neglected the support of His work.

"For from the days of your fathers you have departed from any ordinances and my laws. Return to Me and I will return to you and you say . . . in what have we afflicted Thee? . . . In tithes and in first fruits and you are cursed with want even the whole nation of you. Bring all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in My house, and try me in this, saith the Lord, if I open not unto you the floodgates of my mercy and pour out a blessing unto abundance upon you." (Mal. 3:7-10).

In Matthew 23:23, we have the approval of Christ on the practice. Also in I Corinthians 9:13, the prescription that those who served the altar should live by the altar was so adequately observed that the early Christians had no need of special laws to remind them.

In the course of time, however, as the Church expanded and its institutions arose it became necessary to make laws to insure

their adequate support. The payment of tithes was adopted from the Old Testament and early writers speak of it as a "divine ordinance and an obligation binding in conscience."

The earliest positive legislation on the subject comes from the Bishops' Meeting at Tours in 567, and later from the Council of Macon in 585. Later on in 1179 the Third Lateran Council corrected some wrong notions as to who could receive the tithe.

Perhaps this short script from Soglia (Instit. Can.11-12) sums up the mind of the early Church better than any other. "The law of tithes can never be abrogated by prescription or by custom, if the clergy have no suitable and sufficient provision from other sources, because then the natural and divine positive law—which can neither be abrogated nor antiquated—commands the tithes to be paid."

These references to the practice of tithing as being both widespread and approved give some idea of the attitude of the Church in the early centuries.

Today in the twentieth century the needs of the Church remain just as pressing. The grounds for tithing are as legitimate as they ever were.

(1) We have to build churches for worship in proportion to the growth of our members.

(2) We must establish missions in places where some years ago Mass was never celebrated.

(3) We have to support seminaries for the present and future needs of our country.

(4) We have to provide the facilities of a Catholic Education for our children.

(5) We have not only to erect and maintain the Church, the seminary and the school house, but we have to found hospitals, homes for the aged, orphanages—in a word, the litany of provisions that our religion forbids us to neglect.

Are not all these—or any one of them, a more weighty reason for invoking the law of tithing than the mere requirement of suitable provision for the clergy as mentioned in the Code?

From this cursory review of Scripture, history, Church decree and widespread practice we find basis for our approach and presentation of the subject to our people. We have found them remarkably receptive to the program and we have reasonably creditable results from the systems which in brief I outline below.

Because of the many other demands on them, like school tuition, Catholic Charities, special collections, United Fund, etc., we suggested that the people would set aside 5 per cent for their

parish and the remaining 5 per cent for these public works of Charity. Thus the twentieth century wage earner complies as strictly with the law of tithing as any Christian in early Christian times.

We insist that their offering is part of their worship, that God always demands the best, and that we must give Him the first fruits, not the left-overs.

God rebuked the priests and people of the Old Law for daring to sacrifice sub-grade offerings from their flocks, and later chided the priests for their attempt to find excuses for the people — that they had heavy burdens to bear and could offer no better. God told them they were there to see that His law was carried out, not to question its prudence.

We put all these facts before our people and the majority adopted the plan with the understanding that there would not be any further demands or even requests made on them for parish undertakings. They were given to understand, of course, that all Diocesan projects would need their continued support, and only at the request of the Archbishop would we take up a second collection on Sunday.

#### *What Tithing Means:*

##### (a) TO THE PARISH

Tithing means a newly erected parish can set a goal because it can set a budget.

It means an established parish can call an end to the multiple fund-raising gimmicks and with enough for operating expenses, and more help than is now being given the missions.

It means a parish spirit resulting from the solidarity which always spring from sharing a common cause equally. No social ties of friendship woven from spaghetti dinners, rummage sales, cake displays, or church suppers could ever beget the type of parochial good will that a system of equalizing the burden can effect. The greater the sacrifice the burden entails, the greater the feeling of accomplishment.

##### (b) TO THE PARISHIONERS

A man who believes in God and in his own eternal future should be prepared to work for God and that future.

Nowhere is this lesson more effectively taught and learned than when people are suddenly made aware of how much God depends on them for His cause to be made known.

If a wage earner cannot set aside 5 cents out of every \$1.00.



25 cents out of every \$5.00, \$5.00 out of every \$100.00 for God on Sunday, then he has but a vague idea of his importance in God's plan.

I don't overlook the standard argument about the other demands made on that dollar — and the other nickels that must come out for pressing demands. Yet my answer is still the same to priests and laymen — we don't dare put God's work on a level with the TV, the washing machine, the automobile, and the deep freeze.

God simply does not belong in the lineup awaiting His share. If one gives to God after all other demands are met, then such a person has a wrong concept of his obligations and a complete misunderstanding of God's plan in his life. God demands, and must get, the first fruits of one's labor — not the left-overs.

For the person who adopts this plan we can promise an amazingly satisfying reward, spiritually, on the strength of God's promise; materially also, because God has yet to be outdone in generosity.

In a word it does much for the parish and the parishioner. Every pastor has the right to have his conviction about the special quality of his parishioners. It is a good thing and a proper show of paternal care.

For my part I believe it has helped our people to develop a parish spirit of cooperation that may be equaled but seldom surpassed and I think God has blessed our efforts with success because God has the No. 1 place in our homes, not just in night prayers or grace before meals, but when the family budget is being worked out each week. That is where concern for God's work belongs and how His work will be done effectively and "with honor to the husbandman."

## Part I

# *God's Plan To Support His Church*

## Chapter 1

### *Success of Tithing in Alabama*

IN the past few years God's Plan For Church Support has been introduced and proven successful in the diocese of Mobile-Birmingham. The movement and happy success of twenty some odd parishes in Alabama and Florida can be traced back to five years ago when His Excellency, Archbishop Toolen created the new St. Pius X parish. Father Jennings, the pastor, was given his territory of parishioners, Church land and the customary burden of every pastor, the raising of money to finance parish buildings.

Like any other American pastor, Father Jennings had spent his time as an assistant running bingo games, directing church festivals and fighting desperately to make sure enough tickets were sold before the raffling of cars, washing machines and TV sets. These occupations had already consumed too much of his priestly time and given him too much concern and worry. At the same time who can deny the absolute need for money when there are no parish buildings. After presenting the problem to his people, the pastor of St. Pius X found his people with a similar distaste for the periodic approaching of friends to buy their tickets. He proposed to them a new way. Each wage earner could give a certain percentage of their wage each Sunday to God. If each wage earner in the parish would give five cents of every dollar he earned, one dollar from every twenty dollars, or *five per cent* of his earnings, the parish finance problems would be solved.

They accepted his plan and did their part to insure its suc-

cess. A beautiful multi-purpose building was erected which was to be used temporarily for the church. School rooms, convent and temporary rectory have been built and all in accordance with what is befitting God's Church.

The reader might well muse to himself at this point: That is all well and good and seemingly prosperous for a new parish. It is feasible for a *new* pastor to introduce a *new* system in his *new* parish. The people accept it as part and parcel of the *new* pastor. But what about existing parishes and pastors with existing practices of fund-raising. Our answer is that it works as successfully as in a new parish.

Father Sullivan, pastor of St. Thomas parish for four years, watched and encouraged Father Jennings for he had the same convictions regarding Church support. A few months after the new St. Pius X parish started with this new plan, Father Sullivan pioneered in converting his already bingo-running, ticket-selling parish into what became known as a five per cent parish. He simply told his people what they really *wanted* to hear: The parish had raffled their last car. They played their last bingo game and the people would no longer be bothering their friends with the buying of tickets. He found the people most willing to exchange these cumbersome money raising projects for a certain percentage of their weekly income.

The five per cent plan went over because of spiritual motives, a promise of relief from the sickening task of selling tickets and the general obligation people have and feel of supporting their parish. This plan worked in every case as more and more parishes tried it. Unconsciously these parishes were so very close to God's own plan for Church support. No wonder these parishes were meeting with success! But then why not use God's plan which is known at the Tithe? There are so many spiritual and material rewards promised in the Bible for those who tithe. And is not God's Church indisputably deserving of more gracious support than the proceeds from bingo games and raffles?

The giving of five per cent on the part of the people to the Church is one half of their tithe to God. We like to think the average Catholic gives the remaining five per cent of his earnings to God through Catholic School education, Community Chest, Red Cross, and other public appeals of Charity.

Close to thirty pastors in our diocese have introduced and enjoyed the success of their people tithing their salary. God demanded tithes from the Jews and for hundreds of years the Church legislated on the obligation and necessity of her members complying with the God-given plan for financial support.

The very pastors who two and three years ago thought tithing was something relegated to the era of pre-Christian times and erroneously adopted by the Protestants are now preaching tithing on their annual "Finance Sunday." They have been relieved of money raising schemes and are astounded to study a budget which balances as it never did before.

When so many parishes in one diocese adopt an entirely different financial system, which five years ago was virtually unknown, there must be a great deal to be said in its favor. This is not a fad nor a financial novelty among pastors. It is a plan unconsciously hungered for by the people and given to us by God for the support of His Church.

God's plan has begun to diffuse itself in this diocese with such rapidity and increasing favor that this year alone has seen the financial conversion of ten more parishes. The system has the virtue of constant and reliable success which we would like to share with the parishes throughout the nation.

## Chapter 2

# *History of Tithing*

**H**ISTORIES sometimes possess a small element of boredom. But this history is brief, giving only the important and interesting facts of tithing through the centuries. To understand God's plan of Church support, you *must* know a little of its history.

### *Old Testament:*

The practice of offering part of your earnings to God is practically as old as the human race. Scripture tells us how Cain, who was a farmer, offered up the fruits of the field. Able, on the other hand being a shepherd, offered the best from his flock to God. God then had them actually burn their sacrifices. God did this to show them that He didn't need their offerings, but *they needed* to offer things to God.

Abraham gave tithes to the priest Melchisedech. As we read further on in the 14th chapter of Genesis we see that Melchisedech offered to give them back to Abraham. But note this: Abraham refused to take it back. You don't take back an offering made to God.

Jacob, the grandson of Abraham, (Genesis 28) very solemnly promised to pay tithes of all that the Lord will allow him to earn.

The whole of Chapter 22 in the book of Exodus is *law*. It is the continuation of the Ten Commandments that God gave Moses on Mount Sinai. Here is the 29th verse: "Thou shalt not delay to pay thy tithes and thy first fruits." The law not only says give God what is His due — but *don't* hesitate and postpone your giving.

When the Jews had finally completed that 40-year trek across the desert and began to inhabit the Promised Land, God again gave them orders. He told them the very places where they were to offer sacrifice. They were to ravage the pagan temples with their altars and in their place they were to erect their own temple. "You shall offer in that place your holocausts and victims, the tithes and first fruits of your hands . . ." (Deut. 12:6).

The years rolled into centuries and Jewish devotion reached a low ebb. In the schooling process God was giving His people He was quick to punish their disloyalty and they were overcome by their enemies and carried off into the captivity of Babylon.

After 70 years God through the hand of Cyrus allowed his people to return to the land of Palestine. It taught the Jews a small lesson and they went back home closer to God.

The people were gathered together in a great multitude and received a "refresher" course on God's law. It was seven full days of study for all. They did penance and repented for their sins and the sins of their fathers. And the leaders all promised for their people that they would obey God's law.

In the 2nd Book of Esdras (Chapter 10) the people specifically promised to obey the law of tithes and first fruits. The priestly tribe, the Levites, would receive the tithes from all earnings in every city of the Jews.

These good resolutions started the wherewithall for the building of the temple in Jerusalem but when a little opposition hit the Jews through trouble with the Samaritans, work was stopped. Aggeus was the prophet sent by God to revive the religious spirit of the Jews at this stage of their history. In these words God rebuked the Jews through His prophet: "You have sown much and you have brought in little; you have eaten but have not had enough; you have drunk but have not been filled with drink; you have clothed yourselves but have not been warmed. And he that earns wages puts them into a bag with holes." God asked them why. And then He told them the answer. Because they were not building the house of God. The implication of their falling away from tithing is obvious here. Had they been tithing the temple would have been built. (Note the graphic words of God which hold for every generation and for all time: To keep God's share it is like putting your money into bags with holes in them.)

Then around 400 years before Christ, God scolded the people again because of their lack of tithing properly. Chapter 3 (7-10) in the book of Malachias is an eloquent sermon preached by God to the people through the mouth of the prophet. It deals with the rewards God promises for tithing: "For from the days of your fathers you have departed from my ordinances and have not kept them: Return to me, and I will return to you, saith the Lord of hosts. And you have said: Wherein shall we return? — Shall a man afflict God? For you afflict me, and you have said: Wherein do we afflict thee? *In tithes and in first fruits.* — And you are cursed with *wants*, and you afflict me, even the whole

nation of you. Bring all the tithes into the storehouse that there may be meat in my house: and try me in this, said the Lord, if I open not unto you the floodgates of heaven and pour you out a blessing even to abundance." Here God shows the people what an important part of the law is tithing. The phrase "return" used in the above passage does not mean come back to Me and I will come back to you. "Return" means give back as we can see from the context. Give to Me and I will give to you!

Under the reign of the Machabees the Jews were also reminded of God's law of tithing. It was ever kept before the minds of the people and its history with the Jews is a very active one.

The paying of tithes was not some unique trait of the Jewish people. But all ancient people tithed. The Catholic Encyclopedia mention how the pagan peoples in Lydia, Arabia, and Carthage tithed.

#### *New Testament:*

In the time of Christ tithing was so popular that we find mention in Scripture of the Pharisees even tithing on the herbs from their gardens.

Christ was probably brought up in a tithing home. His mother, Mary, and His foster father, Joseph, were devout Jewish people. We can assume Jesus watched his mother and foster father pay their tithes regularly to the temple. In the Gospel according to St. Matthew (23:23) Christ is talking about the Pharisees. He mentions how they tithe and mentions it is something they should do; but complains about the things they are leaving undone.

For the early Church tithing was a small amount for their generous hearts. They gave all their extras to the Church for the support of the poor and the needs of the Church.

After several hundred years the decree of Constantine the Great put a stop to all persecutions and allowed the Church to build and worship in the open. A great number poured into the Church. All of the new converts weren't so strong as the early Christians (and not so generous). And within time the Church found the need to remind the people of God's law of the tithe. Churches had to be built.

We find positive Church legislation on tithing (which the Church maintained was simply reminding the people of the existing divine law), in a letter of the Bishops assembled at Tours in 567. It was mentioned again in the Council of Macon 585.

Gregory VII (the famous Hildebrand) in the 11th Century severely condemned those who refused to pay tithes. He called

it sacrilegious and said it incurred the danger of eternal damnation.

Just as almost anything can be abused, so there was unfortunately an abuse of tithing in the Church at this time. One of the evils of lay investiture was the fact that laymen were collecting the tithe. In the feudal system the tithe and first fruits were given to the particular landowner, whose land the serf worked. In about half the cases in some countries, the landowner was a bishop of the Church. When the grants of land were passed on to lay landowners, the serfs were still paying their tithes to the landlord. One could hardly say that God was receiving His fair share. A laymen can collect property rent, but not the tithe given to God.

This abuse was recognized and dealt with at the 3rd Council of the Lateran (12th Century).

In the 15th and 16th centuries people were losing the sense of obligation of tithing their earnings to God. The main reason for this was the lamentable wealth of the clergy.

The poor with perhaps an outlook of "occult compensation" felt there was no need to give tithes. It was to come back to them as the poor anyway. What was lost with this was the spirit of giving to God. To help correct this neglect of tithing the Council of Trent insisted on the payment of tithes (Session 15).

As the years passed on into centuries we see that, especially in Europe, parishes were supported by endowments. And where parishes had a good endowment the Church didn't ask for the tithe.

As late as 1868 the Fourth Council of Quebec declared that the payment of the tithe binds in conscience on the faithful. (For the aspects of the morality of not tithing we refer you to Chapter 6.)

In our own country especially, the Protestant denominations see tithing as God's law today. Their churches are beautiful and their missions well supported because they tithe.

We hope the second half of the 20th century will see the return of tithing in our Catholic Church.



## Chapter 3

# *Why Don't Catholics Tithe?*

GOD is the Creator and Architect of the whole universe. He not only has designed the world and its operations, but He sustains and provides for its continued existence. He has a *plan* for everything He made from the orbits of the planets to the lowest worm in the field. God has great plans for the masterpiece of His creation, the human race. The plan is that we live as long as God lives with Himself in the happiness of heaven. And since the time of Christ the medium of salvation is the one true Church started by Christ Himself. The Church plays a tremendous role in God's plan for the salvation of the human race. Our Lord has such deep love for His Church that Scripture tells us this Church is the Bride of Christ.

Wouldn't it be inconceivable that God would have a plan for feeding the birds of the air and clothing the lilies of the field, but would have no plan for the support of His Church? Christ told us to go out and preach the Gospel — missionary work. It would be unreasonable to think that God had no plan for the support of His missionaries. It would be fantastic that God, Who has a plan for the existence of the lowly worm in the field, would have no plan for the building and operating of a school to teach little children about Himself.

Of course, God has a plan and it is known as the tithe. It is a plan whereby every Catholic wage earner gives the first tenth of his earnings back to God.

We can see from the previous chapter on the history of tithing that the practice of the support of the Church in some countries is that of endowments. And in other countries the Church is supported by the obligation of the fifth precept of the Church.

In our great country the endowments are by far not enough. And strangely enough the fifth precept doesn't motivate the people to support God's Church sufficiently. Ever since the doing away of trusteeism in our country, Church financing plays a major part in the worries of a pastor. It is a time consuming struggle for the pastor. Few pastors can foresee a time in the

future when there will be enough financial support. This situation is as tragic as the unbuilt temple in Jerusalem complained about by God in the Book of Aggeus.

In our country the one true Church of Christ — The Bride of Christ — depends greatly on bingoes, church raffles and lawn parties for its support. Is this worthy of God's Church? Is this really the way God wants it? What is God's plan for the support of His Church? The mind of God has been revealed to us by Scripture and by the traditions of the Church. God's Plan is the tithe!

The inadequacies of the present system are becoming all too apparent to the modern American pastor. Here are some of the reasons why:

(1) It helped to bring in a little money but it never brought in enough. It left the pastor bewildered as to how to meet the increasing demands of the parish.

(2) It is a system that overburdens the priests. It consumes his time from buying paper plates for the church suppers to delivering tickets for the next lawn party. It is consuming time he could have spent on the spiritual needs of the parish.

(3) Ticket selling is an aggravation to the people. Basically, the people dislike this type of system. It leaves them with the idea that Father is always talking about money — always talking up the next financial project.

(4) The most important deficiency in this system of raffles, etc., is that though the people donate, they get little or no spiritual profit. When you buy a ticket on an automobile you have your reward. You certainly can't expect a reward from God. When a man pays for three chances on a ham at a church bazaar, he's looking forward to the ham. It is not a complete giving of the money to God. You give the money if you lose the raffle; but you want to *win* the raffle! In many cases people use religion to excuse a little desire to gamble.

(5) There is a natural *need* of an individual to give to God a percentage of his first earnings. God really doesn't need money, but people need to give. This is to help the creature keep constantly in his mind the fact that everything he has comes from God. Our present system *does not* answer this inner need of the individual to admit to himself that God comes before everything else.

(6) Another seriously great flaw in the present system is that our missionaries do not have *all* the funds they could use to spread the knowledge of the one true Church.

On the other hand, if Catholics in this country would tithe, we would be blessed with these advantages: (1) There would be enough for parish needs. (2) The priest would have more time for the things for which he was ordained. (3) The people would be relieved of the selling of tickets and working on fund raising schemes. Once they tithe, they would like it better than anything else. (4) The people would receive tremendous spiritual and material benefits from God. (5) It would be a means for the people to admit their dependence on God. (6) The average parish would be able to give more than twice as much as they give now to the missions. It would answer deficiencies of the old system. (7) There will be the grace of only one collection on Sunday. There will be no collection at the novenas or any other Church service. (8) The people won't hear money sermons except once a year. (9) The spirit of the people will be far better. They will feel closer to the parish and to God. (10) It will settle once and for all in the minds of many Catholics, just how much they should give to God.

#### *Will the Average Catholic Tithe?*

The answer might sound amazing; but from experience we say: "Yes." Tithing and the spirit of tithing must be *taught* to the people. It can be introduced to the people successfully in one or two well-given sermons. (Cf. sermons No. 1 and No. 2 in the last chapter.)

It makes no difference if the individual is rich or poor. The rich must admit exteriorly by tithing that what they have comes from God. The poor man (and at times the middle class man) might say: "*I can't afford to tithe.*" The answer is: *He can't afford not to tithe!* He can't pass up the material and spiritual rewards God promises the man who tithes.

We know innumerable cases of people who used to give what they thought was a generous 50 cents and now give \$5.00 weekly. They tell us how much happier they are. So many tell us the way God has taken care of them. As I'm writing a parishioner of St. Pius X walked in the rectory with a \$100.00 check. It was his tithe of his unexpected Christmas bonus of \$990.00. The people have grown to love giving to God. It's storing up treasures in heaven. As the saying goes: "You can't take it with you, but you can send it ahead of you!"

A reasonable man knows he can't outdo God in generosity. Putting most or part of that tithe in the bank, just in case God won't come through is like (as God once said) putting your money into bags with holes in it. In the Book of Malachias God asks to be tried. He says "try Me in this (tithe) and if I open

not unto you the floodgates of heaven and pour you out a blessing in abundance.”

The pastor who actually questions the workability of the tithe is unknowingly insulting God. The system was instituted by God and hence it is sacrilegious to question its wisdom — to ask if it will work. If there somehow is a failure in it, the fault is with the way it was taught to the people. Remember, God gives enough grace to the people. He takes care of that.

Don't underestimate the faith and generosity of your people—nor the grace God gives them.

Apart from the success mentioned in our first chapter we point to the many Protestant denominations where it works so admirably and efficiently. The Seventh Day Adventists contribute \$205.00 per member annually. This means the average member gives \$4.00 every Sunday. Then there are the examples of men like John D. Rockefeller. He claimed if he hadn't tithed the first \$1.50 he earned he would not have been able to tithe on a million dollars later on. William Colgate, Heinz, of the 57 Varieties, Kraft of Kraft Cheese, and Hershey are just a few of the wealthy who tithe.

Catholics don't tithe today because they don't know the history nor the origin of tithing. In a class of 40 Catholic high school boys not one of them knew what the word “tithe” meant. The average Catholic on the street has no idea of what tithing is. Catholics don't tithe because they simply do not know about it and have not been even remotely exposed to it by their pastors.

The time is so ripe for the Church to ask for the tithe due her by divine law that in this time of harvest, professional fund-raisers (laymen) are doing a tremendous business. There are a number of these organizations throughout the country. They send a campaign director to your parish who stays for the duration and directs the program. It amounts to a parish drive for a specific period. These companies profit from the campaign—their “cut” of the take. The reputable ones work on a fixed sum, not a percentage. An example of the latter is found in Information Magazine (December 1958). For raising \$153,000.00 the company received \$5,000.00. We don't think professional fund raisers are in God's original plan for the support of His Church.

Here are the flaws in the system of professional fund raisers: Giving to God is a spiritual thing and hence it is under the domain of the pastor. A layman may by the study of the science have “know-how” of fund raising. Still he's not really qualified. Money giving to God has spiritual overtones, and if there is nothing spiritual about the money given to God, it isn't given to God.

A layman can't write the "money sermon" for the pastor. This pamphlet will teach you more than any professional fund raiser ever know about the support of God's Church.

Then, too, when the "professionals" come into the parish their program is for the people to give a certain amount for a certain period of time. This is wrong. The people should give regularly to God His fair share as long as they are earning a salary.

YOUTH—If Catholics are going to tithe—if the next generation will see American Catholics tithing their earnings—the youth of today must receive their training now. The reason the youth of today is so important is because they are the adults of tomorrow. It is while they are still young that their characters are developed. Character traits are deeply and impressionably formed and developed at an early age. St. Ignatius used to say: "Give me a child until he is seven years old. You can have him after that."

Age has no bearing in God's plan for the support of His Church. Tithing pertains to *anyone earning money*. This very definitely includes youth. A national survey, just completed, reveals that the average teen-ager has more than \$8.00 a week for spending-money. Nearly half of the boys interviewed relied on jobs for their money. It is granted that the only source of income for many teen-agers is an allowance. But in most cases this allowance is for chores done around the home; and hence in a sense is *earned*. How much does the average youth give to God from his earnings? Next to nothing. Youth should be taught not only that they should give to God, but *how* they should give. They should be taught to *tithe their earnings*. And in the case of youth the full 10% must be given to the Church unless he gives to mission drives at school. The importance of this cannot be stressed enough.

The ordinary Catholic youth has never heard the word "tithing" in his life. I spoke to religion classes at the local Catholic High School and the boys were absolutely amazed that God had such a wonderful plan for the support of His Church. They were struck with the fact that tithing is mentioned 46 times in the Bible and *they* hadn't heard of it. After my talk, the boys wrote compositions on the subject and what they thought about tithing in their personal lives. The compositions only proved how impressionable youth is and how generous. They were convinced that no matter how poor a person is and no matter how much he may think that he can't tithe, he is foolish not to tithe. It's so simple. You can't outdo God in generosity. One student wrote about giving God the left-overs. He continued—"how could anyone dare do that?"

Tithing should be learned and begun far earlier than the teens. All children of "allowance-age" in the elementary grades should be taught about tithing. They should be taught to divide by ten as soon as possible. If they get 30 cents a week, 3 cents goes to God. If they get 50 cents a week, a nickel every Sunday is giving God His fair share. And if they get a dollar, ten cents belongs to God. The Church doesn't really need the nickel or dime, but that child needs to give his tithe. If he tithes all during his youth, he will tithe as an adult.

Children and teen-agers should not only be taught to tithe but to use the envelopes. Children's envelopes are a *must*. And they need the reminding and the example of their parents until they are in the habit of using their envelopes every Sunday. If there is a week of no work for a working teen-ager or a held-back allowance for a child, it is a good idea to have them use their envelope anyway. Tell them to put in the empty envelope. And with it would go the prayer: "If I had it, Lord, you would get the first tenth." If they put in the empty envelope with that prayer three or four Sundays, when they did get an income, they would certainly give God His share.

There is no reason at all to exclude the youth from God's program. Besides the fact they absolutely need the early training, they are earning something in most cases and are just as much bound by the obligation as any other rational creature of God.

We hope the fruits of this work will be that pastors will be using God's Plan of Church Support instead of the undignified method of bingos, raffles and church bazaars, nor can we see any justification for fund raisers.

## Chapter 4

# 5 Per Cent

NOW that we have dealt with the tremendous advantages of tithing, let's give it a serious look in terms of putting it into the practical lives of our people.

First let's admit that some people are *afraid* of tithing and yet some of these very people are unknowingly practicing it. Then there are those who are very close to tithing. And lastly, there are those who are devoid of any knowledge of giving to God. Unfortunately the people who are so close to tithing are missing the spirit of tithing.

How do we apply God's law of tithing to the individual Catholic? The tithe is: *10% of one's salary given to God.* Everything is clear in that definition. We could, however, explain the phrase "given to God." The obvious interpretation is that money given to the Church, tuition for a Catholic education, donations for special collections during the year, and donations to public charitable organizations is *money given to God.* Money spent on a Catholic education is very definitely given to God. It is given simply because of a man's belief in God—his desire to please God by having his children learn about God. Charitable organizations which feed and clothe the poor, and care for the orphans and aged are doing God's special work.

Take the man who makes \$100.00 a week. Ten dollars of that goes to God. If he has children in school his tuition could be \$8.00 a month, which is \$2.00 a week. That is 2% of his tithe. He might average a dollar a week to charitable organizations (United Fund, etc.) That counts for 1%. About \$2.00 a week might go to the St. Vincent de Paul, Catholic Charities or a special collection ordered by the Bishop. That would be another 2% of his tithe. All of this will total 5% of his earnings. The remaining 5%, or in some cases 6% or 7%, will be put into the Sunday collection.

A diagram of tithing for a particular family.  
(It will be different in individual cases).

Salary .....	\$100.00 a week
<hr/>	
Catholic school tuition .....	\$ 2.00 a week
Charitable organizations .....	\$ 1.00 a week
Bishop's special collection, St. Vincent de Paul ....	\$ 2.00 a week
<hr/>	
Total .....	\$ 5.00 a week
Sunday Mass Offering to the parish .....	\$ 5.00 a week
<hr/>	
The tithe to God weekly .....	\$ 10.00
<hr/>	

This is the way thousands of Catholics tithe in the diocese of Mobile-Birmingham.

Tithing in a few parishes is erroneously known as the 5% plan because in most cases with heavy school tuition, it is about 5% given to the parish on Sunday.

There are two ways to have the people give the 5% on Sunday. The one way is just another scheme for fund-raising with telling the people the needs of the parish and having a yearly parish drive for 5% of their earnings. It entails the promise of no other fund-raising activities and only one collection on Sunday. In starting a new parish especially it gives the people the feeling that they own part of the parish. It is their Church and school since they financed it outright, and not through the medium of bazaars and raffles. Naturally, this has a great parish unifying force.

The second way to collect 5% for the parish is through using God's own plan of tithing. It has all the advantages of the first way—and *far more*. It gives them the great rewards God has promised to those who tithe. Tithing makes them spiritually better people and that should be a pastor's main interest.

It must be emphasized, too, that the tithe is not any tenth of one's salary; but the first tenth. Families that have a budget put a certain amount away for the house payment, a certain amount for the groceries, for the insurance payments, for God, and for clothes. It's like having pigeon holes for the various payments. But that first pigeon hole is for God. This is the true spirit of tithing.

The 10% of one's earnings is on rare occasions calculated as 10% of the net earnings, otherwise known as the "take home pay." We have extreme difficulty considering this as God's fair



share. It is the gross pay—his actual earnings—from which the Lord should get His tithe. Perhaps in the chronological order the State gets its part of a man's salary first, but in the real order God comes first. You don't tithe after you pay income tax, social security, and pay for part of a U.S. Savings Bond.

The idea of tithing on "take home pay" is simply not tithing on your complete earnings. It is not giving God His "fair" share.

One of the authors was paying a series of visits to a Baptist who showed some interest in the Church. She maintained that tithing, giving \$32.00 a month of her husband's \$320 salary, was something she *could not* give up were she to accept the Catholic religion. At the time her mother was sick and the good Baptist woman wanted to visit her. She could have gone by bus for \$30.00, but couldn't afford it. She told the author she would be afraid to touch what belonged to God. It was simply God's will that she not go home. If God wanted her home, He would find a way. Ten minutes later, while the writer was still in the house, the phone rang. It was her husband. He told her the sudden news of an unexpected Christmas bonus. It was 3 times the amount needed for her to go home. Notice the spirit of tithing of our Protestant friends!

A person might give God His fair share and wonder how he'll pay all the bills. God is and always will be all powerful. People who give the first tenth of their earnings won't have to *worry* about unpaid bills. God has promised to open the flood-gates of heaven with blessings in abundance on them. And you know God isn't a liar!

Teach the people about the tragedy of giving God the left-overs. A Catholic high school student recently wrote this in a composition on tithing: Our parents don't give us the left-overs, the crumbs from the table. God doesn't give us the left-overs. He has given us His own Flesh and Blood. How can anyone dare give God the left-overs?

Instruct the people in the fact that the 4%-5% of the tithe given to God through Catholic school tuition, charity program, etc., must be given in the spirit of tithing. It is given to God as part of God's fair share.

The authors have tried both methods of collecting 5% for Church support. As usual, nothing is as good as God's own plan.

If you, as a pastor, put your parish on the 5% program without the idea of tithing, it may work or it may not work. But if you preach tithing from the pulpit, it can't fail.

Experience has proven that more people will cooperate because it is God's own plan, rather than because it is a bargain made with the pastor for the end of bingoes and raffles.

## Chapter 5

# *Motive for Giving*

PARISHIONERS are God's rational creatures and they *must* have a motive for giving. Some people give because it is embarrassing not to give. Other people out of force of habit, as a secondary reflex, seeing the collection basket coming near them, habitually dig into their purse or pocket for some change. These are wrong motives for giving to God. It is your job to teach the people the right motives of giving—the motives for tithing.

The fundamental principle behind tithing is: *Realizing that everything a person has comes from God.* Most people realize this. They say: Thank God for my house. Thank God for my family. Thank God for my job. Why do they thank God? They thank Him because He is the Giver of all things that we have. People know this but they must be reminded of this in connection with tithing.

Everything is as it were on loan to us from God. Who can deny the fact that He can take anything He wants back from us without asking? Supreme ownership pertains only to God. To use the Biblical expression for it, a man is a *steward*, an overseer of the things God has put under him for his use.

One of the main *reasons* God laid down the law of tithing is to keep before the minds of the people the fundamental principle that everything we have comes from Him. Giving God the first tenth of our earnings is admitting this and is like saying: "Thanks God, for letting me use the other nine tenths.

Tithing fits right in with the practice of the theological virtues. In other words giving God His part of your earnings is a way of exercising faith, hope, and charity.

First, consider the amount of *Faith* one must have to part with the first tenth of his earnings—especially if there are luxuries being forgone and overhanging bills around. It is a matter of absolute faith in the existence of God and the truth of His promises as found in Holy Scripture.

The virtue of *Hope* or *trust* is exercised and enhanced by the practice of tithing. In the book of Malachias, for example, God

asks people "to try" Him and this means "to trust" Him in giving Him tithes. You are not boldly putting Almighty God to the test, but you are simply trusting in His promises of spiritual and material blessings. We know there is no one else in the world more worthy of trust than God Himself.

Thirdly, tithing is an acid test of a person's love of God. We all know the people who mouth gushy prayers . . . I love You, God, so much . . . I do love You more than myself—just as long as God does not touch their pocketbooks. These people do not really love God for it is a constant psychological law that if you really love someone you want to give him something. It is vain and empty to say you love God and not want to give Him the first fruits of your earnings.

Not to be overlooked in our motive of giving to God is the way we can see the money actually used for God's work. The people can see their very intimate part in the building and upkeep of God's Church and school.

The Catholic zeal for souls and concern for the needs of our mission fields is another strong motive for giving one's tithe to God. We believe that an established parish that receives tithes should give at least three times the ordinary amount to the missions.

Tithing draws people very close to God, making them realize that God comes first, and that nothing comes before God. God comes before a new automobile, a better home; God comes before a new suit of clothes and before a new toy for the children. Remember how the tithe came first for the good Baptist, even before a trip home to her sick mother.

Tithing also teaches and nurtures a spirit of detachment. Think of the parable of the rich man who filled his barns. He told himself he had *security* and would live for years. He would eat, drink and be merry. God appeared to him and called him a fool, because he was too attached to the things of this world, and would stand before Him in judgment that very night. Consider the sad case of Judas. The one sin which completely overcame Judas was his lack of detachment from money. He is the only man of whom God said: "It would have been better had that man not been born!" Judas could not stand to watch \$50.00 worth of ointment poured on the feet of God Incarnate, when it might be instead put in the purse he was carrying. Judas loved money with a passion and it was this passion which made him betray Our Blessed Lord. This is what a complete lack of detachment can do for one. You can't serve two masters. You can not love money

and at the same time love God. Tithing is a tremendous help for a man to prove to himself that his one Lord and Master is God.

Our people must *learn* and *practice* the *right motive* in tithing. Giving without the proper motive is worthless. It is like the tragedy of suffering. Suffering itself is not a tragedy, but it is suffering gone to waste that is a tragedy.

From our theology we have the realization of the importance of the intention in the mind of a man.

It is the difference between a Sacrament and no Sacrament; between merit and no merit; and between receiving God's blessings and not receiving God's blessings.

If people Sunday after Sunday stuff their church envelopes with dollar bills and have no thought of God, it is giving going to waste. Why not short-change the envelope. Especially when the budget is running close and it's a sacrifice to put God's share into the envelope, these motives which we have mentioned should be in the mind and heart of the people *when they give*.

A very negative and poor motive for giving to God is to avoid the penalty of sin. This aspect of the moral obligation of Church support will be discussed in the following chapter.

## Chapter 6

# *Morality of Church Support*

[T is an expression of the saints that Moral Theology alone will not get you to heaven. You also need Ascetic Theology. Moral Theology tells you just how far you can go before you are breaking God's law in a small way; and how far you can go before you are guilty of serious sin.

In the preceding chapter we spoke of the necessity of a high motive for giving to God. Giving to God simply to avoid sin is not the highest motive. But Moral Theology is necessary; and for that reason we are here dealing with the moral obligation of giving to God. There are two distinct laws on Church support: The law of tithing and the Fifth Precept of the Church. We will deal with each separately as regards their origin and to what extent they bind in conscience.

### T I T H I N G

#### *Origin of the Law:*

The law of tithing is of Divine-Positive law for the Old Testament and also for the New Testament. In the holy Bible the places are numerous to attest this fact in the Old Testament. In the New Testament the fact is clear from Scripture and from the teaching of the Church. Since we are living in the New Testament we will write out the reasons why we know tithing today is of divine-positive law.

#### *Scriptures:*

The law of tithing was backed up by Christ when He talked about the Scribes and Pharisees, saying: "Woe to you, Scribes and Pharisees, Hyocrites! Because you pay tithes on mint and anise and cummin, and have left undone the weightier matters of the Law, right judgment and mercy and faith. *These things you ought to have done*, while not having the others undone." (Matt. 23, 23).

A great proof of this fact from the Bible is that Christ said He did not come to destroy the law; but to perfect it. (Matt. 5, 17). This is God Himself saying that the Old Law is not destroyed.

There are some things of the Old Law which were abrogated in the process of Christ perfecting the law.

Our Lord perfected the laws on marriage when He ruled out the Mosaic Bill of Divorce. Christ perfected the law of Charity when He said it is not only wrong to kill a man but even to get angry with another. Christ perfected the Sixth Commandment on Adultery, saying that a man is guilty, even if he commits adultery only in his heart.

God by a special vision to St. Peter (telling Peter to eat purified food—Acts 10, 14) abrogated the many rites of purification. Circumcision was abrogated by God through St. Peter because of the more perfect means of justification, Baptism.

Some things in the Old Law were changed; others were not, in the process of perfection. The Ten Commandments are not enumerated in the New Testament; but bind us because Christ did not destroy the Law. And Christ did not change or destroy any ordinance of tithing but only backed it up.

#### *The Church Teaches:*

God speaks to people today in two ways, through the Bible and through the teaching of the Church He founded. The Church has taught that this is a matter of divine positive law. The following give us the mind of the Church:

(1) Early Christian writers taught that tithing in the New Testament is of Divine-positive law.

(2) The Council of Macon in 585 says the Church looks upon tithing as "of divine law, since tithes were instituted not by man but by the Lord Himself. (Can. 14, X de decim. 111, 30).

(3) In 1208 a profession of faith was written for the Waldensian heretics. The last part of it reads: "We believe tithes, first fruits and offerings paid to the clerics, are *ex praecepto Domini*."

(4) The Theologian Soglia says: "The law of tithes can never be abrogated by prescription or custom . . . because the natural and *DIVINE* law, which can neither be abrogated or antiquated, commands that the tithe be paid." (Institut. Canon., 11, 12).

If this is of Divine-Positive law, is it binding under pain of sin today? The Code of Canon law gives us the answer in Canon 1502 where it says: "Concerning tithing and first fruits, special provisions and laudable customs to that effect should be maintained in each territory."

So we are left with the Principle: *Tithes are due to the Church; but the Church need not demand their payment.* It is like a married daughter coming home with her husband to live

with her parents. Rent is due the parents. However, if the parents are living comfortably, they might not demand the rent. But there would be nothing harsh or unjust if they did demand the payment due them. Nor would the Church be acting beyond justice if she asked for the tithes as the Church did for centuries.

The Code makes it clear that the special provisions of a territory must be observed. A Bishop could make the paying of tithes obligatory under the pain of serious sin if he had a good reason. (There are many American Bishops whose financial needs constitute this good reason).

The question has come up: How can the law of tithing for the New Testament be of divine-positive origin if the Church can say it is not binding in conscience (in most places). Here is the answer: The sole end of this law is for the support of the Church. And if the Church is at a stage where she feels she doesn't need so much, she need not use her divine-given right to demand the full tithes from her subjects.

#### 5TH PRECEPT OF THE CHURCH

##### *Origin of the Precept:*

The obligation of supporting our pastors is one of *natural law* because pastors being appointed by legitimate authority have a right in justice and by implicit contract to be supported. (Davis).

The obligation is also one of *positive divine law*. We see this easy enough from 1st Corinthians, 9, 14: "The Lord ordained that they who preach the Gospel should live by the Gospel."

Canon 1496 of the *Code of Canon Law* expresses the obligation in these words: "The Church has, moreover, the right, independently of civil power to demand from the faithful the necessary means for conducting divine worship, for the decent maintenance of the clergy and other ministers and for her other proper purposes."

The *Third Plenary Council of Baltimore* specified this to mean that the faithful have the obligation to contribute to the support of their parishes.

##### *Binding in Conscience:*

The obligation in itself is one binding seriously in conscience. All moralists agree to this. But when it comes right down to the extent of the support and when sin is committed, it isn't a simple matter of a specific amount to the penny. There are too many unknown factors for a general law. Different parishes have different needs. People make different salaries. In Moral Theology by Jone-Adelman we find this opinion that nobody would be

guilty of *grave sin* unless by his neglect the clergy would be in grave need or the other parishioners would be greatly overburdened.

A neglect to do one's share to support the parish properly without injury to the clergy and fellow parishioners would be a venial sin.

How can a parishioner determine the amount of his share of the parish support? The pastor in making a reasonable budget for the year can thereby determine in round figures the obligation of the average wage-earner in his parish. Naturally, an adjustment in the amount is made for the above average wage earner and the below average wage earner.

This summarizes the salient facts on the morality of Church Support. We would like to add that Catholics do not have to be bound under pain of sin to tithe. We have found them most willing to give God His Share from the motives mentioned in the previous chapter.



## Chapter 7

# *Effects of Tithing*

THERE are multiple effects of tithing and we find them all to be *benefits*. To convey a comprehensive idea of the benefits we divide them into four general categories: Those that concern (1) the parish; (2) the diocese; (3) the missions; and (4) the tither.

### *Effects on the Parish:*

Every parish that has adopted God's plan for church support has improved its spiritual and material status. If a substantial number of parishioners give 5%, 6% or 7% of their income to the parish there would be enough for all the necessary parish buildings. These would be buildings befitting the dignity of the Church. After all, our Catholic churches house Our Lord's physical presence in the Blessed Sacrament.

The parish would be able to pay decent salaries and living wages to its employees—the housekeeper, school janitor, etc. How can we preach social justice unless we practice it?

With the problem of the scarcity of Sisters there is an increasing need for hiring lay teachers for our schools. All necessary teachers can be hired and adequately paid.

Another effect is that the parish will be blessed with only one collection. In so many of our churches the collection basket goes around numbers of times and everytime the poor worshiper turns a few pages of his missal the basket is under his nose once again. It's a distraction to the proper attendance at the Holy Sacrifice. Tithing means only one collection at the Offertory of the Mass, along with the true spirit of offering of self with the Offering of Christ.

The bingo games and raffle wheels will be stopped because their need will be eliminated. An annual church supper for which each parishioner receives a *free invitation* is a great idea for the sake of parish spirit. This has been most successfully done at St. Pius X in the past two years. The purpose of this is to help the parishioners get better acquainted, but never for the purpose of raising money.

A very beneficial effect is that the parish priest will have

more time to worry about the people and their spiritual needs, instead of the people's money. These are the blessings which the Lord's way of financing bestows upon the parish itself.

#### *Effects on the Diocese:*

There are many diocesan projects with which the Bishops are heavily burdened. The diocesan high schools have to be built and maintained. Seminarians must be educated. Orphanages, hospitals and charity bureaus have to be financed.

The sufficiency of the tithe for the parish will overflow and will support these necessary diocesan projects in a better way than previously.

#### *Effects on the Missions:*

It is scandalous how little we Catholics with the true faith give to the missions in comparison to the Protestants who give so generously to spread faith in the mission fields. The difference is basically that our Protestant friends tithe and Catholics do not.

The Bishop of Kenya (Africa) turns away 50 seminarians a year because he lacks the money to educate them. There are schools in Nigeria where the children cannot be taught because there is not enough money to pay the catechists. More hospitals could be built; a greater number of orphanages kept up, and there would be more missionaries in the mission field if there were more funds. Many more souls could be sharing the true faith in the world if we helped the missions more by tithing.

#### *Effects on the Tither:*

One thing tithing does for the individual is that it settles once and for all that frequently puzzling question: How much should I give to the Church? People are preached to "ad nauseam" on giving. They hear "be generous," "be sacrificial," "give a little more." But how often are they actually told exactly what is God's fair share? The one effect of tithing is they will know what to give and their conscience will be perfectly at ease.

A *greater effect* is that tithing produces a spiritual transformation in the tither. It gives a proper sense of values. It helps him see things as they really are: That God comes first before everything else, and everything he owns comes from God.

With the proper motive for tithing people will grow strong in the virtues of faith, hope and charity. They will have a greater interest in their parish, their diocese and in the missions.

All of the marvelous effects of tithing can only be seen when your parish is giving to God His fair share of their earnings.

## Part II

# *How to Start a Parish Tithing*

## Introduction

THE tithing program was started by God, not just for a few but for all. It makes no difference what kind of a parish you have, large or small, rich, poor, or middle class, you can successfully put this program into effect. The following are the mechanics of starting tithing in a parish.

Two items must be stressed from the very beginning. The first is to have a personal conviction that this system is God's own idea. Obviously you cannot give to others what you yourself do not have. Priests, therefore, should familiarize themselves with everything available on tithing. We believe that priests should not only know all the theory of tithing, but they should put it into practice in their own personal lives. This would show their own sincere belief in the blessings promised by God.

The second and more important item is to *pray* for the success of the program in your parish. Make this an intention in your Masses and Office and ask the people to pray for this special intention. Prayers for the good of souls have priority with God. Furthermore, the plan is God's own for the support of His Church, and He has been known to favor the program 100%.

We find the use of the laity essential in one particular phase of introducing the program into the parish. The pastor preaches two sermons on the subject and diffuses his ideas by informal talks, and a letter or two to his people. But on the appointed Sunday one out of every five parishioners will go out and contact his fellow members of the parish and bring them a pledge card. It is not the job of the worker to explain *all about* God's plan of Church support. This was done in the pastor's two Sunday sermons. The good example of the "worker" who has already signed his own card is what counts a great deal. These workers who make the rounds are not asking for a favor. They are doing *these people* a favor. In many cases the busy pastor could not make the rounds to all his people.

Our reasons for using the laity are basically the same as those

that justified such marvelous organizations as the Legion of Mary. Furthermore, experience has shown that the "workers" have completely been won over to the program, and have signed their own pledge cards before they ask it of others. This means one-fifth of your parish has already accepted God's plan.

The program can be put into operation anytime during the year. However, it has been found that to begin the program in the middle of December has decided advantages. In outlining the technique we have used the calendar for 1958 as our basis.

## Calendar Chart

### REMOTE PREPARATION

<b>Date</b>	<b>Activity</b>	<b>Page</b>
Sept. and Oct.	Parish Census .....	35
November	(a) Preparation of all literature .....	35
	(b) Parish Indoctrination .....	37

### PROXIMATE PREPARATION

<b>Date</b>	<b>Activity</b>	<b>Page</b>
December 2nd	(a) First Mailing .....	37
	(b) Captains' meeting .....	37
December 7th	Sermon at all Masses .....	38
December 9th	(a) Second mailing .....	38
	(b) Workers' meeting .....	38
December 14th	(a) Second Sermon .....	39
	(b) Signing of Cards .....	40
	Visitation by workers .....	40
December 17th	Final Workers Report .....	40
December 21st	Pastor's report at Sunday Masses .....	40

# Remote Preparation

*September and October:*

A complete census of the parish should be made about this time. The aim of the pastor should be that no one should be overlooked or omitted in this program. This is a parish-wide indoctrination and appeal for the use of God's Plan to Support His Church. The census should be exact about getting unmarried sons and daughters who are wage-earners and who are still living with their parents. They, too, must be given the opportunity to benefit from the practice of tithing.

*November:*

(a) *Preparation of All Literature:* There are three items which should be worked on and completed during the month of November. They are (1) Pledge cards; (2) First mailing material; and (3) Second Mailing material. The following are a few necessary points on each of these three:

(1) A sufficient number of pledge cards should be printed to cover the parish. Below is a sample which has been used in and of the Mobile parishes.

## SAINT X CHURCH

Parishioner's Name .....

Address .....

I will return to God His fair share which I trust will express my thanks and merit His continued blessings. I consider this offering as the first fruits of my income and dedicate it to God's service through my church.

MY FAIR SHARE      10% (—)  
   5% (—)  
   — % (—)                      —weekly

SIGNED.....  
   Parishioner

Your offering may be made weekly or monthly according to your income.

Note that the words "Pledge" and "Promise" are deliberately omitted from the card, because of the unwillingness of some to sign what they regard as promises. It is instead a simple statement of fact, an expression of their willingness to give their fair share to Almighty God.

There should be no fear on the part of the signer as to whether or not he *can* carry out his intention. Tithing is on the per-

centage basis and if his income decreases his obligation decreases. (The converse will also be true: An increase of salary means God's share is increased).

The card requests the signer to estimate the amount of his weekly contribution. The purpose of this is to give the pastor an idea of his expected income per week for the coming year.

A final point about the pledge cards in November is that after they have been printed, the names and addresses of each wage earner should be written on each card.

(2) First mailing. This should be some general information on tithing. Unfortunately there is not much available. However, there are two ideal pamphlets for general mailing:

"Yes . . . I Tithe," by Rev. Duane Theobald, and

"Greetings From Your Pastor," by Rev. John O'Brien, available at Our Sunday Visitor Press. The pastor himself could compose his own brochure as we have done in previous years. There is ample matter in the first part of the book for the pastor to write his own. A little folder written by the pastor could have a personal touch for his individual parish.

(3) Second mailing material also should be prepared ahead of time. It should be a specific letter from the pastor informing his people that the program is being initiated in the parish. It should present them with the spiritual and material effects on the parish as well as on the tither. This letter, though prepared ahead of time will not be sent out until a later date, after the first sermon to the people on tithing. Below is a sample letter:

Dear Parishioner:

Last Sunday I explained to you the history of tithing and the fact that it is God's plan for the support of His Church.

Within the past few weeks I talked to some of our parish societies to find out how you would feel about using God's age-old plan for the support of our parish. I heard many in agreement and I heard no objections.

This system will eliminate all lawn parties, raffles and ticket selling. The parish will be supported simply by giving God His fair share every Sunday. It means that the parish will be supported in a manner befitting Almighty God and the dignity of His Church.

This Sunday I will explain the mechanics of this system in detail. It is necessary for every wage-earner to sign a card stating that for the next year, he promises to give God His fair share, in thanksgiving for all His blessings.

I would like you to sign this card after Holy Mass this Sunday. If you prefer not to sign it after Mass, or if you are unable to attend Mass this Sunday, two of your fellow parishioners will call on you sometime Sunday afternoon and will ask you to sign it. Receive these visitors kindly. They will be asking you to do nothing that they have not already done themselves.

You have no security apart from God. This is one way in which God wants you to recognize that everything you have comes from Him. Between now and next Sunday, talk this matter over with Almighty God. I am sure you really want to do His will in this matter.

I am praying that God may not be disappointed in you.

Prayerfully yours,  
FATHER "X"

(b) *Parish Indoctrination*: Though this idea is as old as the human race it will be revolutionary to many of the parishes. Hitherto most of our Catholic people have heard of it only as something practiced by our Protestant friends. Therefore, during the month of November indoctrinate them in an informal manner. This can be done by bringing the matter up at different parish societies, discussion clubs and getting their reactions. Also, have at hand the answers for the obvious objections which might come from some.

It is well to end up all informal discussions on the subject with an appeal for the people to pray for its acceptance and success.

## Proximate Preparation

*December 2nd:*

A. *First mailing*: The contents of this first mailing were prepared in November. Along with this general pamphlet on tithing should be a note from the pastor requesting the parishioner to give the reading material thoughtful consideration during the next few days.

B. *Captains' meeting*: First we must explain what we mean by a Captain. Our main use of the laity is on the one Sunday afternoon when we have one-fifth of our people whom we call "workers" visit their fellow parishioners. They simply bring them their pledge cards for signing. Workers travel in pairs and a pair should have approximately 10 calls. For every 10 workers of 5

teams there should be one "Captain." Depending on the number of families in your parish your needs will be as follows:

Families	Workers	Teams	Captains
100	20	10	2
400	80	40	8
800	160	80	16

A strong word of suggestion concerning the quality of men who will be your "Captains." They should be intelligent, exemplary Catholics. These are your leaders in the coming program and at this meeting they should be fully and adequately informed as to its nature, meaning and techniques.

It will be the responsibility of each captain to recruit nine more workers for the general meeting, the names of which will be assigned to him at this Captain's meeting.

*December 7th:*

Sermon at all the Masses: This sermon should be preached, preferably by the pastor himself and should deal basically with the nature and history of tithing.

*December 9th:*

(a) Second mailing: This, you remember was prepared in November. It is the sincere appeal by the pastor to his people for the support of this program.

(b) Workers' meeting: This is a meeting of every man who is going to work on the program in the parish. The first purpose of the meeting is to inform the workers more fully as to the nature of tithing and how it will operate in their own parish. The second purpose is to distribute amongst the workers the names of their contacts. The pledge cards themselves will still remain in the rectory until the next Sunday. Then, either through voluntary choice of the workers for certain contacts, or some other system, the pledge cards can be made up into groups of ten cards for each pair of workers.

This meeting, which is extremely important for the success of the program, depends in no small way upon the indoctrination given the workers. If these workers are really informed and convinced, half the battle is won. The *esprit de corps* of the workers



can be helped by making this a dinner meeting or at least by serving light refreshments.

Because of the importance of this meeting the pastor should diligently prepare himself and his program. The following are a few suggestions:

1. Tell the workers they should sign their own cards before they make their visits on Sunday. Then, they will not be asking anyone to do what they have not already done.

2. They should be allowed to choose their own working partner.

3. Since the people will be asked to stay at home at a certain time on Sunday, the workers should be told to utilize this aforementioned time.

4. They should regard each visit as if the success of the entire program depended on that one call.

5. No card should be left at a prospect's home. If the individual has not made up his mind, an appointment for a re-visit should be made.

6. The workers should make no apology for their visit. They go in God's name and are doing God's work. They are doing a favor to the individual, not asking for one.

7. When the workers meet people who are fallen-aways, or who do not practice their faith, they should speak about being a better Catholic and getting back to Mass on Sunday. If the card isn't signed, but there is a promise to get back to Sunday Mass, the workers have accomplished a great deal. The card might well be signed in the visit next year. It has been found that workers have done necessary good in this one-day coverage of the parish.

8. The poor should not be by-passed. They need the benefits of tithing as much as anyone else. Nobody should be missed.

We feel this meeting is so important that if a worker missed the points which the pastor will stress at this meeting then it would be better if he would not do any visiting.

*December 14th:*

(a) Second Sermon: This should be an application given in the first sermon on tithing, including a summary of the spiritual and material fruits which will accrue to themselves and the parish. Sermon No. 2 in the back of this pamphlet is a good model for the second sermon.

The pastor should preach this sermon at all the Masses and the Holy Sacrifice should be offered for the success of the program.

(b) **Signing of Cards—Visitations:** There are two possible approaches in getting the cards signed. The one way is to send all the cards out with the workers and have them all signed in the homes. The second way is to make the cards available after the Masses on the Sunday of the second sermon. If this is done two of your key men should be in the rectory, and after every Mass take the names of those who have already signed out of each group of ten cards, which have been prepared for the teams of workers. There are advantages and disadvantages to both ways.

*December 17th:*

(a) **Final worker's report:** Again this can be done in two ways.

One way is to have the workers come back that Sunday afternoon with their results (after two hours) and make their report to the pastor, resolving to go back to anyone they did not find at home. The final deadline should be Wednesday night. Many workers will be finished Sunday and so will not return Wednesday night.

The other way is that after the workers visit on Sunday afternoon, whether they have made all contacts or not, they will not return to the rectory before Wednesday night. There will be somewhat of a dramatic meeting Wednesday evening, with a large blackboard diagram into which the results are recorded. Team after team will take its results to the pastor in the back of the room, who will privately go over the results and then he will send them to the blackboard. On the board the goal is marked and the degree of success can be seen as the reports are turned in.

*December 21st:*

(a) **Pastor's report:** This should not be a sermon; but simply a word of thanks to the workers and to the people. The total figures should be given to the people and a plea for them to keep their bargain with Almighty God. Then, a final word of assurance that the pastor will keep his word regarding the end of the money gimmicks.

## Twelve Suggestions

(1) Once you promise that the subject of money is closed for the year, keep that promise. There will be a few people falling behind; but don't preach a sermon on it. We would suggest sending out a quarterly letter with the complete roster of envelope numbers and next to the number, the total amount given in the past three months. Those falling behind will be embarrassed when they notice some of the other amounts of the more generous.

A letter reminding them of the sacredness of the contract they signed in the beginning of the year would be helpful.

(2) There are some people who get paid once a month; others get paid twice a month. Make it clear to the people that they can give their 5%-6% whenever they get paid. It should be the first check written after the salary comes in! In some places the people just drop in empty envelopes on their off Sundays to save embarrassment. In other places where the system has been in practice for several years it's a known fact that the tithe is given when the salary is received.

(3) The people should be taught that the money set aside for the Church envelope is given to God and is *therefore sacred*. Nothing should present a temptation to spend it. You can't rob God.

(4) In the case of a husband and wife who both work, one pledge card is sufficient for them. But there are cases where people prefer two cards and two boxes of envelopes.

(5) If a Catholic wife is married to a non-Catholic wage-earner she ought to discuss God's share with her husband, if he will listen. If he goes to a Protestant church, the tithe should be split between the churches of the two spouses. However, if he won't listen, she is not expected to endanger her marriage by pressing the point.

(6) At times the poverty of a family will work on the sympathy of a worker on visitation day. The worker should not attempt to hinder the generosity of such people. They should encourage them to tithe, reminding them that this might just be the cure for their financial distress.

(7) In dealing with the people who say they are too rich to tithe, remind them that the law of God on tithing is for all—not just the poor and the middle class. Repeat the first principle to them: Everything they have comes from God and He wants them to acknowledge this by tithing.

(8) A rather widespread abuse is the use of our school Sisters to get money for our school projects. The children are told to bring a dime for this and a dime for that. The Sisters certainly have enough to do without becoming money collectors for the school. It is also taking an unfair advantage of the children and their parents. Children hate to show up at school without doing what sister asked. And, of course, never with this program in the parish should a child come home with tickets to sell.

(9) A very practical idea is to have three or four of the men of the parish to be the regular money counters for you on Sunday morning. It relieves the pastor of a very time-consuming

ing job. Secondly it makes the men have more of the feeling of belonging to the parish; and it's always good for the men to see what the collection really is.

(10) Here is another suggestion about people who start off well in the beginning and fall off as the year progresses. Give them about two months in which to correct themselves. If they don't, you might send two of your best men around to visit them. This, however, is a rather delicate matter and should be left up to the judgment of the pastor as to the procedure to be followed in each individual case.

(11) Newcomers to the parish should not have to wait nine or ten months to learn about the program in the parish. As always, there should be a visit by the pastor as soon as possible. After a visit from the Legion of Mary and a month or two has passed, the pastor should drop in and explain God's Plan for Church Support used by the parishioners of that parish.

(12) The program as outlined here is for putting the plan into your parish the first time. Every year the same basic program would be carried out. Every year you must set aside two Sundays and the subject of money is discussed from the pulpit. Once every year you have to review in the minds of the people the original ideas you have given them on tithing and God's plan for the support of His Church. And every year you must have your parish Visitation Sunday and carry it on with the same energy and zeal as the first time you did it.

The first year you will get the majority of the people to accept God's plan. Don't think you will get 100% cooperation the first time. A pastor doesn't get *all* his people to attend Sunday Mass, nor all of them to receive the Sacraments. But each year you have the program in your parish, you will find an increase in the number accepting the plan.

## Part III

# *Sermon Outlines*

## Outline of Sermon No. 1

### 1. *I am going to talk about money*

(a)—Incorrect attitude.

—Some: reach for their wallets. No not going to talk you out of something but—*into* something.

—Others: "Money is no subject for the pulpit."

(Guilt complex)

(b)—Anything that involves your spiritual life is fitting subject for the pulpit.

—Money has spiritual overtones—

—people have been clubbed and murdered for money.

—paid by the drunkard; to the prostitute.

—Sins because of money.

—Souls are bought and sold for money. God Himself was sold for 30 pieces of it.

—There are souls in hell today because of money.

Concl: Make sure money doesn't ruin you.

### II. *Correct Attitude—given by God Himself*

(a)—Key word—"Stewardship"—not owners; but overseers.

—You don't own material things. God just lends them to you.

(b)—Principle: "Everything we have comes from God." So that we don't forget this, God made a law that 1/10 goes back to God.

(c)—God promises spiritual and material blessings to those who tithe.

—Don't people want spiritual and material blessings?

### III. *Holy Scripture on Tithing*

(a)—Abraham gave tithes to the priest Melchisedech.

—Offered back to Abraham; but Abraham would not take back the tithe given to God.

- (b)—When Moses was given the Ten Commandments, there followed more injunctions: . . . “Thou shalt not delay to pay thy tithes and first fruits.”
- (c)—In coming into the promised land God told the Jews just where to offer their sacrifices, *tithes* and first fruits.
- (d)—After the Babylonian Captivity — (Aggeus) Jews rebuked by God: “You have sown much and you have brought in little; you have eaten but have not had enough; you have drunk but have not been filled with drink . . . he that earns wages puts them into a bag with holes.”  
The Jews were not building the temple (falling down with their tithing).
- (e)—In the book of Malachias we find God amazed at the stupidity of the Jews. God asks the Jews a question: “Can a man rob God?”—and he answers it and tells them that they were trying to rob God and as a result they were cursed with *want*. Then God says to them: “Bring all the tithes into the storehouse. Try Me in this and see if I open not unto you the floodgates of heaven and blessings unto abundance.”
- (f)—Matt. 23, 23. Christ mentions how the Pharisees tithe and adds that these things they should have done while not leaving the weightier things of the law undone.

#### IV. Conclusion

- (a)—Catholics gave tithes for over 1000 years.
- (b)—God did not plan for His Church to depend on bingoes and raffles for support.
- (c)—Next Sunday I will explain *how* Catholics tithe and *why* they should tithe.
- (d)—Abuses that crept in is no argument to terminate the system nor is it an argument to justify substitute methods of expanding God’s Kingdom.

## Outline of Sermon No. 2

### I. *God’s Providential Plan for Everything*

- (a)—God not only created; but sustains from orbits of plants to the smallest worm.
- (b)—The Church is His plan for our salvation.

(c)—Inconceivable that God would have a plan for feeding the birds of the air and no plan to support His Church (Bride of Christ).

(b)—His plan for Church Support is the tithe.

## II. *The Way in Which Catholics tithe*

(a)—Tithing—is giving one-tenth of your earnings to God.

(b)—In many cases about 2% of earnings are given to God through Catholic school tuition.

(c)—2% given through public and private works of Charity.

(d)—Maybe 1% is given through the Bishop's second collections.

(e)—5% or more would be given to the parish on Sunday.

(f)—It means—only one collection, once a week.

—no church bazaars

—no raffles with ticket-selling

—no bingo

## III. *Faith, Hope and Charity practiced*

(a)—*Faith*:

—Must believe in God and His promise to give Him the first ten percent.

—Belief in the words of Scripture.

(b)—*Trust*:

—Book of Malachias, God says: "Try Me" in this and this means to "trust" Him.

—Do you trust God, or is He a liar?

—Will I keep a little back in case God does not come through. Like putting it into a bag with holes.

(c)—*Charity*:

—People who say I love You God so much . . . just as long as God does not touch their pocket books.

—Constant psychological law: If you really love someone you want to give to him.

—Vain and empty to say you love God and not want to give Him the first fruits of your earnings.

## IV. *God deserves first place*

(a)—God is more important than your home, wife, washing machine, anything else.

(b)—Give to God first to *prove* He has first place.

## V. *Conclusion*

(a)—Today we ask you to sign cards.

—Simple statement of fact—no promise!

—"I will return to God My Fair Share" on each card.

- (b)—Can't afford to tithe? You can't afford not to tithe.  
 —Can't afford to pass up all the promised blessings.  
 —Hebrews said at times: Couldn't afford it and they were *cursed with want*.
- (c)—Take God as your partner. I guarantee. God is backing me.

## Outline of Sermon No. 3

- I. *Judas: "Better had he not been born"*
- (a)—Tragedy of Judas, due to (1) his love of money  
 (2) his lack of trust in God.
- II. *Bethany*
- (a)—Christ and Apostles invited to a meal by Mary, Martha and Lazarus.
- (b)—Mary pours \$50.00 worth of ointment on feet of Christ.  
 —Judas shocked and disappointed.  
 —He fails to see that God comes first.
- III. *Judas' mistake, made today*
- (a)—First principle of tithing: Everything comes from God.  
 —God does not come second or third; but first.  
 —We prove this by tithing.
- (b)—God does not want *any tenth*: but the *first tenth*.  
 He rebuked the Jews: "In what have you afflicted Me? In tithes and first fruits."  
 —Salary divided into pigeon holes, food, God, house, clothing . . . but God gets No. 1 place.
- (c)—Don't give God the "left-overs."  
 —He has not given us the "left-overs" — but His own Flesh and Blood.
- IV. *Judas lacked trust in Christ*
- (a)—He remembered His prediction of His death more than the promise of His resurrection.
- (b)—Judas salvages for himself 30 pieces of silver.
- (c)—How is your trust in God?
- V. *Conclusion*
- (a)—Give to God with love.
- (b)—Can't outdo God in generosity.
- (c)—Give Him not your fair share, but His Fair Share.  
 (He already has said what this share is).





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— NOTES —



