

# Generosity

**Give liberally**

"He who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and he who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully."

(II Cor. 9:6)

# Generosity as a Commitment of the Parish

- PROCESS
- EDUCATE
- JUSTIFY
- ACKNOWLEDGE
- CELEBRATE

# Process

## Focus on Giving, NOT Selling

- Transparency and Trust
  - Necessary for building a culture of generosity
- Eliminate barriers to the Parishioners' ability to give
  - Percentage of Income giving with no minimum
  - Free will donations for candles
- Monthly or quarterly stewardship communication
  - Sermons/Sunday bulletin/Monthly articles on generosity

- Provide necessary tools and user friendly ways of giving
  - Online through PayPal, Venmo and similar platforms
  - Weekly donation envelopes
  - Frequency of giving options: monthly, quarterly, annually
  - Stewardship Kiosk: Dedicated informational and transactional area
- Parish Philanthropy
  - The Parish to give to worthy organizations and individuals in need (in addition to and in coordination with the Philoptochos philanthropic work)

# Make It Personal

- Engage and communicate with Parishioners
- Invite small groups of parishioners for a “round table” coffee hour discussion on selected Sundays hosted by 1 - 2 individuals who are members of the Parish Council, various Ministries/Programs or other lay leaders of the Parish.

# Educate

## Educate Parish Council Members and the heads of various Parish Ministries and Programs as to the value of Generosity

Parish Council and the heads of various Parish Ministries and Programs should discuss generosity at their meetings and spread the message

Letters from the Clergy and Parish leaders addressed to and geared toward various age groups discussing Generosity and Stewardship

## Youth & Adults

### Teach Generosity in Sunday School

Establish a Sunday School program where children learn to use donation envelopes to give to the church on a weekly basis. They will grow to do it as adults. (Should establish envelope Sunday giving for adults as well)

“If you would be perfect, go, sell what you possess and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow me.” St. Matthew 19:21

“The bread you do not use is the bread of the hungry. The garment hanging in your wardrobe is the garment of the person who is naked. The shoes you do not wear are the shoes of the one who is barefoot. The money you keep locked away is the money of the poor. The acts of charity you do not perform are the injustices you commit.” St. Basil the Great “There is your brother, naked and crying! And you stand confused over choice of floor covering. “ St. Gregory of Nyssa

“Feeding the hungry in the name of Christ is a greater work than raising the dead.” St. John Chrysostom

“God protects and loves the charitable and philanthropic person.” St. John Chrysostom

“Without charity, virtue is an illusion” from Abba Isaiah, *Ascetic Discourse*

“Love the poor, and through them you will find mercy. “ St. Isaac of Syria

“You have and eat; give each day to someone who is poor to eat also.” Modern Orthodox Saints: Saints Raphael, Nicholas and Irene of Lesvos. (Constantine Cavarnos, INSTITUTE FOR BYZANTINE AND MODERN STUDIES, Belmont, MA, 1990)

## Quotations on Generosity

# Justify

Articulate the Parish's  
Mission/Vision/Values

Invite Parishioner participation in  
developing Mission/Vision/Values  
of the Parish

- Explain the purpose of the church
- Sacraments
- Spiritual development
- Personal well-being (Joy of unconditional giving)
- Fellowship and Community

# Justify

## Philanthropy on the Part of the Parish

### Helping Others

Include a line item in the Parish budget for Philanthropy not directly connected to the Parish, such as:

- Project Mexico, IOCC, FOCUS
- Community charity
- Other Parishes in need



# Justify

## Personal Joy Testimonial

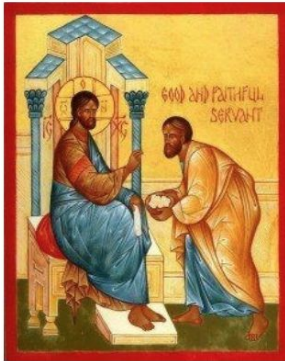
I feel humbled that anyone would ask me for my thoughts on generosity because they think I have been generous. I love donating to the Church because the Church teaches us to give gifts in humility, it gives time to those that need attention, it gives money to those that need financial help, and most importantly it brings us closer to God, through guidance and prayer.

Being able to give time and money is so much easier than having to be in the position to receive (I have been on both ends). Generally, one is honored publicly for giving. The act of giving is honor enough. Consequently, I give anonymously.

In closing, the greatest gift that anyone can be given is the gift of prayer and this I share loudly. This is the privilege given to every person by God: We are all able to pray for our church, family, friends, those we don't particularly care for, and even for those we don't know. There was a family member of mine that was sick and an Orthodox orphanage prayed for him and miraculously he lived longer. That probably was the most exquisite gift ever received and it taught me that even those who are perceived as being unable to give, can give you the best gift of all: prayer.

-An Anonymous Parishioner

# Justify: Examples



## THE GOOD AND FAITHFUL STEWARD CHALLENGE

*"As each one has received a gift, minister it to one another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God" (1 Peter 4:10)*

As we celebrate the 100th Anniversary of our Church, we want to ask ourselves: **Who are we as Orthodox Christians and as the Church? What do we want to be known for as a Church?** We are:

- ♦ A Church Family that worships and loves God above all else
- ♦ A community which shows our love for God through the love we show to one another as well as through the love we show to those outside our church
- ♦ A community of faith that reaches out to the world shining God's light in a dark world

Sts. Constantine and Helen in Webster, MA gave \$30,000 to Parishioners to give to others

St. Mary's in Minneapolis, MN gives yearly seed money to its Philoptochos [Slide](#)

**STRENGTHEN STEWARDSHIP NOW - GENEROSITY**  
*Diakonissa Alexandria Kalina*  
***St. Mary's Greek Orthodox Church, Minneapolis, MN***

St. Mary's has long been active in serving the local community through time, talent and treasure. In fact, "To Serve" – specifically the poor in the community – is one of the five "tasks" in its Mission Statement. To that end, and because we are blessed with very generous stewards, a line item was added to the parish budget years ago to disperse funds to organizations that serve the most vulnerable in our community, as well as nationally and internationally.

For the most part, three ministries are responsible for vetting requests and distributing the funds that are in the parish budget for philanthropy. One of the ministries is Philoptochos, which receives the largest portion (\$40,000 this year). It designates organizations to receive funds and the amounts to be donated to each. Discretionary funds that remain are distributed after important requests are received, vetted, and approved by the Philoptochos board.

The Missions and Outreach Ministry is another ministry funded by the line item in the parish budget (\$5,000 this year). Funds are distributed by the ministry team following vetting of requests and team agreement. Most of these funds go to local causes.

Finally, there are discretionary funds in the parish budget that are available to the priest. He may distribute those funds privately in sensitive cases, or through vetting and vote of the parish council. The amount varies, but after the death of George Floyd and subsequent looting and burning of local businesses (some of which occurred not far from our church), the parish council distributed substantial funds to several local organizations, including a food pantry long supported by the parish.

St. Mary's, MN. Parish includes philanthropy as a budget line item

# Acknowledge

Acknowledge and thank all acts (small and large) of Generosity (time, talent, treasure)

- Thank you calls/letters/postcards to all, including children
- Express thanks and appreciation frequently in all contexts and for all levels of giving
- When done in writing, use an original signature, whether signed by clergy or lay person

# Celebrate

## Parish wide celebration of time/talent/treasure

- Appreciation brunch, luncheon, picnic, dinner dance — complimentary for Stewards
- Post list of Stewards
- Public recognition of Parishioners who give of time and talent