

PARISHES THAT GIVE A PERCENTAGE OF THEIR INCOME TO THE POOR AND OTHER CHARITIES.

Sacrificial Giving encourages parishioners to see their giving of money as a way of expressing gratitude to God for what they have been given. The giving of money to the parish, to the poor and other charities, is a concrete way of putting our Christian beliefs into action. Our giving should be planned and in proportion to our own income and is something we do first with our money rather than last. The parish is putting its money where its mouth is.

In order to model Sacrificial Giving, the leadership of each parish should designate a percentage of its income to programs or charities on the local, regional, national and international levels. This will be a way of expressing gratitude to God as a parish community and will be a concrete way of reaching beyond itself to help the poor and those in need. Just as it is said that people have a need to give, perhaps a parish also has a need to give outside itself, otherwise it could become too centered on its own needs. Parishes that have chosen to do this have found that their own needs are in better perspective.

Although many parishes have found this idea to be interesting, a significant number of them never started because they thought the idea of giving outside themselves was beyond their means. Just as parish leaders will be asking the parishioners to “*Take a Step*” this year in their own giving, parish leaders may wish the parish itself to “*Take a Step*” toward its own ideal giving percentage. Perhaps a parish could start with 1-2% this year and gradually increase over time.

A great way to integrate this characteristic into the parish is by ‘twinning’ with other parishes – both in the diocese and ‘overseas’. There are parishes both within the diocese and overseas that are struggling financially due to socio-economic circumstances. These parishes could use some assistance.

Parish leadership should inform the parishioners of the results of this program on a regular basis. Consistent reports in the parish bulletin are a great start.