

# First Fruits

*"Honor the Lord with your substance and with the first fruits of all your produce; then your barns will be filled with plenty, and your vats will be bursting with wine." (Proverbs 3: 9-10)*

## What Does It Mean To Give First Fruits?

To give your "First Fruits" means to make an offering to God of the first and best portion of all we receive. We do this both as a sign of our love and in thanksgiving for all the many blessings we have received. We offer not only the first fruits of our financial resources but a generous portion of our time and talent as well. We give in proportion to what we have received. This means we give from our substance and not from our surplus. Giving only from our surplus leads nowhere. It is an action which has no power to transform either our values or our lives. Giving from our substance requires a sacrifice and leads to conversion of mind and heart. Click on the title of each fruit to learn more.

### **STEWARDSHIP OF TIME**

24 hours, 1,440 minutes, 86,400 seconds - each of us has been graced with an equal amount of time. How is yours being spent?

Consider beginning each day with prayer, attending Mass on a regular basis, spending quiet time with the Lord at Eucharistic Adoration, or participating in a small group to nurture your life as a Disciple of Christ. Whatever way you choose to steward the gift of time, prayerfully consider how you are choosing to put God first.

### **STEWARDSHIP OF TALENT**

Each of us has been graced with gifts to be used to spread God's love. There is a ministry for everyone. Consider taking on the mission to welcome new parishioners to our parish, serve as a Catechist, pray for others, offer leadership to a ministry, just to name a few. St. Alphonsus Parish has a variety of ministries that use everyone's talent. Please consider joining these ministries and sharing your time and talent with us.

### **STEWARDSHIP OF TREASURE**

We ask that every parishioner prayerfully considers the gifts that God has given them. In gratitude for such gifts, we hope you give back to God through a significant gift to St. Alphonsus Church on a regular basis. This giving back to God in support of the mission and ministry of the parish is essential to the spiritual life of you, the giver, and to the ongoing operations of the parish.

## Placing God First in our Lives

This means making God's priorities our priorities. When we place our loving Creator at the center of our life, we become more prayerful, more focused on loving and caring for our families and our neighbor in need and less preoccupied with material things. In short, we find the true source of happiness and fulfillment that we all seek and that the Lord alone can provide. It's been said that "People make the time and find the money for what they value most." We must challenge each other, as disciples of Jesus Christ, to value God above all else. This belief will lead us to put our faith into action by finding the time and money to promote God's priorities because we have made them our priorities as well.

# Planning Our Giving

When we plan our gifts of treasure, the Lord of our life receives the first portion instead of what's left over in our wallet or purse when the basket passes our way on Sunday morning. We generally plan the things in our lives that are most important to us. When we plan our giving, and set this money aside first, we demonstrate the great importance that God and the support of the Gospel have in our lives.

Putting our trust, security, and faith in God, instead of in money and possessions. When we give our gift at the offertory, we are expressing our belief that God will "make good" on the solemn and repeated promise given to us that we would be taken care of. We trust in faith that what is left after we give our gift will be enough for our material needs.

# Acknowledging Our Creator As The Source Of All We Have And All We Are

Everything we have ultimately has been given to us by our God. We are called to be good stewards, caretakers, or managers of these gifts by using them for God's purposes and priorities. Acknowledging our Creator as the source of all we have and all we are. Everything we have ultimately has been given to us by our God. We are called to be good stewards, caretakers, or managers of these gifts by using them for God's purposes and priorities.

# Giving The Way God Gives And Loving The Way God Loves

From the beginning of time, our Creator has given humankind the gifts of life and unconditional love. One day our God saw fit to give the first fruits of love for us, the sacrificial gift of an only son, Jesus. Jesus gave his own life for us on the cross. He set an example for us of giving unconditionally and of sacrificing so that others might live. We walk in the footsteps of Christ when we give sacrificially a part of our substance so that others might live. The Scriptures tell us that those who follow the example of Jesus will be the first fruits of the redemption (James 1:18 and Revelation 14:4).

*"As soon as the word spread, the people of Israel gave in abundance the first fruits of grain, wine, oil, honey, and of all the produce of the field; and they brought in abundantly the tithe of everything."  
(2 Chronicles 31:5)*