

Support Your Parish *Online*

By John Deinhart, *Director of Stewardship and Strategic Planning for the Diocese of Knoxville*

These are challenging times for so many – filled with confusion and uncertainty. At this time, so many are in need of our support. Our families, neighbors, community leaders and healthcare workers, or one of countless organizations trying to make it through this uncertain time - all need our help. In a special way, your parish is among them.

Even though public Masses have been suspended at the present time, parishes continue to operate, serving their communities. They still have facilities to maintain, staff to pay, and ministries to provide. They have mortgages, utility bills, and general operational expenses. As you might expect, with no public Masses, regular offertory for many parishes has taken a significant hit. With the vitality of the parish depending on its offertory collection, it's important that we continue to support our parishes now more than ever.

The largest expenses for most parishes are employee related. As employees who work for the church are not normally eligible to receive government sponsored unemployment compensation, Bishop Stika has asked parishes to commit to retain current staff and not make any staffing changes despite any declines in offertory. In a time where many employees find themselves out of work or have had hours and pay significantly limited, supporting those who work in our parishes is not only vital to continuing our operations, it's also an issue of justice.

At my parish, St. Thomas the Apostle in Lenoir City, I know all of our staff members and their families by name - I expect most of you know your parish staff as well. I know how important Lupe and Kevin and Jill and Joe are to my family and all those who call St. Thomas their parish home. I know I can always turn to them and they will be there for my family and me. At this time, they need to know of our continued support for them.

One way we've done that is to continue our offertory support by moving to **Online Giving**. It's simple, safe and convenient. (Trust me it really is easy - even my dad, a self-proclaimed "techno-phobe" in his 80's, appreciates the ease and convenience of giving to their parish online). It allows us to continue to support our parish each week and each month, regardless of if we've been able to participate in person at the parish on any given week. With an ongoing monthly commitment to the parish, our financial support continues at St. Thomas even when we are out of town, at another church, or unable to attend Mass during this extraordinary time.

Please consider supporting your parish online by accessing your parish's website directly or connecting through a secure link provided by the Diocese. You can make a commitment to your parish at the diocesan website <https://dioknox.org/parish-offertory>. It takes only a few minutes to make a one-time gift or set up a regular ongoing donation. In either case, rest assured that all proceeds will go directly to your parish just as your regular offertory envelope or a gift in the offertory basket would.

Our priests and parishes have always been here for us and will continue to be here for us now and in the future. Please continue to provide your support to your parish during this time so they can continue in their vital ministry.

Lastly, but importantly, please keep our priests and parish staff in your prayers. I know they are praying for all of us.