Offertory increase homily Sept 19/20, 2026

Let's just say that the unions would not be happy with the landowner in today's parable. However, Jesus used it to illustrate God's over abundant generosity to his people. As Americans, we tend to view things from an economic perspective—how will this initiative/congressional plan/ change in policy benefit me financially? We worry about how to provide for our family's future, especially in turbulent times. As well we should. We need to be judicious in preparing for the future. Remember the old fable the grasshopper and the ant? The grasshopper played around all summer while the ant collected food and stored it away. When the fall came and the weather turned colder, the grasshopper came looking for assistance and was turned away because the ant had only saved enough for his own family. Preparing for the future is important.

But there is another point to the Gospel parable. It is not only that God is generous but we also are called to be generous with the gifts we have been given. Perhaps not to the extent of the landowner, but we need to look out for one another. In Paul's letter to the Philippians, "Christ will be magnified in my body, whether by life or by death." Paul is not just speaking of himself; he is challenging every Christian to do the same: to magnify Christ. In other words, we are to be Christ for others.

This theme is further continued in the first reading from Isaiah where we are reminded that we must always seek the Lord even though his ways and thoughts are above ours. Implicit in that reading is that we should strive to be more like God and see things from his perspective. We are invited to strive for the greater gifts and to loftier ideals in order to become more like God.

In other words, we are looking always to improve, to reach for the stars, and to excel.

As we enter into a new academic year, we pray for students, teachers, and coaches that they too will reach for the stars and be inspired to develop their particular skills and talents, not just for their own edification or glory, but in order to benefit their communities and society in general. When society is improved and becomes more God-like, God is praised and his people are blessed.

We are invited to become more generous in order to build, to create, and ultimately to love. As you know, I very rarely discuss finances. My feeling is that each of us should make decisions based on one's own experiences. We are holding our own here at St. Therese. You have been incredibly generous with your time, talent, and treasure. When I first arrived in 2019, I was amazed at the number of volunteers that served here. I think there were about 800 that were officially known or recorded. People joined forces to ensure that events ran smoothly. We offered many programs which benefited our parish as well as our community. Through your generosity, the marginalized and the poor were being fed by the Gospel and through material and financial assistance. That spirit of discipleship continues to this day.

But as you know the world is much different in 2026 than it was in 2019. We had the experience of COVID-19, the challenges of an ever-changing political and social landscape, and now the restructuring of our archdiocese. The time is now right for us to look to the future in a more deliberate and structured way.

St. Therese parish is here to stay. We recently celebrated our 35th anniversary as a parish. We began with about 400 people. Today, we have about 2600 registered families (which is around 6500 people)

and we are registering more each day. The demographics of Shelby Township are changing with the increase of younger families moving in as houses and condos are being built. We are well-known in the area for our programs and events. People want to come to St. Therese, not just to worship but to experience our community of faith and fun.

That is why I am asking each of us to prepare for the next 35 years by building up our financial resources. *We are embarking on an initiative entitled "Little Ways, Lasting Gratitude." Following the teachings of our patroness, St. Therese of Lisieux, we know that little gestures, little words, little actions often have a huge impact. St. Therese believed this; she lived this. A seemingly small token can reap great rewards. More importantly, when we do small things in the name of God, we are blessed beyond measure and for that we are grateful. The small things that people did back in 1991 to establish our parish have borne fruit for 35 years. We have much to be thankful for not just today but for many years to come.*

To this end, I am asking each family to consider increasing their contribution of time, talent, and treasure by ten percent. It sounds like a lot, but in reality, it isn't. *Ten percent is a "little way" that will bear great fruit for which our parishioners, both current and future, will have lasting gratitude.* If you spend an hour a week coming to Mass, consider staying 6 minutes longer in private conversation with God. By doing that you will build up your relationship with God and avoid the long lines exiting the parking lot. If you volunteer 10 hours, consider adding an additional hour of time. If you have a particular talent that you have not yet shared, offer your services.

From a financial perspective a ten percent increase will do a lot to help us prepare for the future. If you currently give ten dollars a week, consider contributing 11. If you tithe 100 dollars per month think about giving 110. If you give a thousand dollars a year, maybe offer eleven hundred. Obviously, this is just a suggestion. You need to look at your own particular resources and needs first. But 10 percent for most people is not out of reach. Please pray about what you might be able to increase for the future. For some people, they may be able to do more than 10 percent. We recently transitioned to PushPay as our on-line giving platform. More information on how to increase your gift is in the bulletin or on our website.

As we prepare for our future as Catholics and as parishioners, we are invited to become more Christ-like. One way is to be generous as God has been generous to us. Think of the blessings God has given each of us. How can we repay the Lord? Obviously, God does not need our money, but God has asked us to "conduct ourselves in a way worthy of the Gospel." One of the hallmarks of the Gospel of Christ is generosity of heart which is reflect by the ways in which we share our time, talent, and treasure. This year consider increasing your generosity by ten percent to build up your relationship with your neighbors and with God.