



DIOCESE OF  
Jefferson City

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## Frequently Asked Questions on tuition, fundraising and capital campaigns in the Catholic stewardship way of life

In support of our baptismal call to be stewards of our God-given gifts, the Diocese of Jefferson City embraces the Catholic stewardship way of life. Our diocese has a rich history in stewardship; our strong Catholic school system is one measure of the blessings from a stewardship mindset. As we move more deeply into the stewardship way of life, this manner of living our faith changes the way families, parishes and the diocese financially support the mission of our Church.

The Cathedraticum and the Catholic Stewardship Appeal (CSA) have been the primary methods used to fund our obligations. The CSA includes an annual direct diocesan appeal to fund the diocesan chancery and ministries; assessed special collections at Christmas and Easter to fund the education of seminarians and priests; the Infirm Priests Fund; the Priests Retirement Fund and the cathedraticum assessment (an annual contribution supporting the bishop's ministry which dates to the early centuries of the church.) In addition, seven other second collections are also taken up throughout the year to support the national and universal ministries of the Church.

Catholic Stewardship Renewal denotes the new method of funding the mission of the Church through a simplified assessment of a 10% tithe to the diocese on all ordinary parish income, and one assessed special collection at Christmas to fund the Infirm Priests Fund and the education of seminarians and priests. The 10% tithe to the diocese is used for diocesan ministries, financial support for the Missouri Catholic Conference, and the national and universal ministries of the Church. The only other special collections (not assessed) in this new model of stewardship are at Easter, for retired priests and religious, and the July Diocesan Mission Collection.

Two recent policies, one on "Inactive Catholics and Tuition" and the other on "Capital Campaigns and Fundraising in the Stewardship Way of Life," are worthy of consideration by parishes adopting Catholic Stewardship Renewal. This document intends to provide answers to some possible questions that could be raised by parishioners and parish leadership.

## **Why are these changes necessary?**

A Catholic stewardship way of life encourages each Catholic to embrace the essential aspects of what it means to be a Catholic. In brief, this includes prayer, participation and sacrificial giving.

## **What is “prayer and participation?”**

Prayer and participation are a way to describe two essential means for a Catholic to become a more committed disciple of Jesus Christ. Prioritizing our quiet time with God and our participation in our parish community means we are striving to live as God calls us to live.

## **What is “sacrificial giving?”**

Sacrificial giving is a term to describe tithing, a biblical practice of giving back to God a “tenth” of God’s blessings to us. In the practice of stewardship, Catholics are encouraged to give 8% to their parish and 2% to other charitable efforts. This is an amount which perhaps very few of us currently give; it is offered as a goal which could be reached over time.

From offertory and other ordinary contributions to the parish, the parish tithes to the diocese, which in turn tithes to support the Missouri Catholic Conference, the defined national collections and other financial obligations to the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB), and our obligations to support the Holy See. Catholic parishes are not independent congregations but belong to the Universal Church through their communion with their local bishop.

## **What does this have to do with our school?**

Catholic schools in the Diocese of Jefferson City are vital ministries of our parishes. Catholic education pertains to the mission of the parish and not just the obligation of the parents. Therefore, the whole parish supports the Catholic school as it does all other ministries of the parish, through prayer, participation and sacrificial giving.

As our pastors and principals learned more about the stewardship way of life, they asked for guidance regarding situations in their schools in which Catholic families’ behavior was inconsistent with the Catholic faith and the stewardship way of life.

## **Can you share some of these situations?**

In most of the cases brought to our attention, a reluctance to attend Mass regularly was the most significant stumbling block.

Other instances described Catholic families who have joined other ecclesial communities (ie, Protestant churches), while desiring to keep their children enrolled in the parish school and pay tuition.

The third situation occurs in parishes located on the border of our diocese. Catholics from the neighboring diocese registered at a parish in our diocese, so that they could obtain a free Catholic education in our diocese, without participating in the parish. (The Diocese of Jefferson City is one of two dioceses where parishes subsidize the cost of educating the children of active parishioners.)

## What does the decree do?

The decree enacts diocesan particular laws (policies) which empower pastors to address these situations:

1. Catholic families who refuse, **after many invitations**, to live as active stewards;
2. Catholic families who join other ecclesial communities (i.e., Protestant churches);
3. Catholic families who reside outside the Diocese of Jefferson City.

## Why can't we allow the current practices to continue?

Our schools are **Catholic** schools and not simply private schools. The policy empowers pastors to use their judgement on how to encourage Catholics to live as active stewards while at the same time making pastoral accommodation in appropriate cases.

## What will happen to the families who don't agree with the new policies?

Among other aspects, the policy allows the possibility of “grandfathering in” **currently** enrolled students of families who refuse to attempt a life of active stewardship by allowing them to pay a **recommended** tuition rate of 110% of the actual cost to educate a student. This amount is **recommended** for two reasons:

- The practice of allowing Catholic families who refuse to live as stewards to simply pay tuition undermines the vision of a stewardship way of life. Since tuition is payment for a service rendered it should, in this case, be reflective of tuition rates at private schools in the area. Furthermore, since income from this tuition will be considered ordinary operating income for the parish, subject to the tithe, it should be a rate which includes the tithe in the price: 110% (100% of cost to educate + 10% tithe).
- Providing this option may prompt families to be open to a life of active stewardship.

The policy is in effect for one year, after which the bishop will again consult with all appropriate individuals and consultative bodies for possible revisions.

## Can a parish still have capital campaigns?

Capital campaigns will continue to be a method for a parish to raise money, but only for extraordinary capital improvements. The practice of tithing on blessings received through special campaigns continues, but in a modified way.

In the past, capital campaign donations were assessed through the cathedraticum -- a diocesan tax assessed to the parish based on its previous year's financial report, unless a reduction or exemption was granted by the bishop.

In the Catholic Stewardship Renewal model, all funds raised through an approved capital campaign are subject to the 10% tithe.

However, for campaigns which are designated as Major Campaigns (campaigns for real expansion, restoration, or beautification), the bishop will return half of the tithe from that campaign to the parish as a means of sharing in the approved capital improvement project. In

addition, the remaining 5% tithe may be applied to the causes specified in the policy with the approval of the bishop. In other words, the parish may choose 5% of their campaign funds to be used for one of the special collections, for struggling parishes practicing stewardship, or for the direct support of the diocese.

This approach is not how other stewardship dioceses assess capital campaigns. In the Diocese of Wichita, for example, all capital campaigns – regardless of scope – are subject to the full 10% tithe with no diocesan “give back.”

### **What if I only want my contribution to go to a specific project, i.e., the capital campaign, for my parish?**

Capital campaigns can be a great source of income for parishes undertaking major projects with the approval of the bishop. It is sometimes tempting for people to give only to a capital campaign and not in support of the day-to-day ministry of the parish – and therefore the Catholic Church. While gifts to a capital campaign should be over and above the normal tithe, parishioners are to be reminded that half of the 10% tithe to the diocese is returned to the parish, and the other 5% can be given to one of the special collections for the diocese or to a fund to assist their sister parishes with financial challenges.

### **Our parish relies heavily on fundraisers, since our Sunday offerings are insufficient. The new policy declares we can only have one special event fundraiser for the parish and one special event fundraiser for the parish school. How are we going to meet our budget?**

A proliferation of fundraisers has resulted in a self-fulfilling prophecy in some of our parishes. Parishioners assume the fundraisers are the primary source of income for parishes, as there is a strong request for volunteers and in-kind donations. Parishioners then reduce their Sunday offering, assuming their volunteer efforts at the fundraiser can replace their financial donations.

In a stewardship way of life, parishioners' tithe to their parish is the primary and foundational means by which they support the ministries of the parish. This will require a renewal in parishes with multiple fundraisers, to help people re-focus their commitment to the parish on sacrificial giving, prayer and participation. This will allow our parishes to renew themselves as sanctuaries of mercy and centers of charity, places of hospitality and welcome.

The former fundraisers can contribute to this renewal, as they can be repurposed as community building events, sometimes called “friend-raisers” or “fun-raisers.”

### **Are there any other restrictions to the one annual special event fundraiser?**

The policy states that only one special event fundraiser may be held each year in the parish and a second special event fundraiser for a parish school. The funds generated must not be used to fund the regular operations of the parish or school. The proceeds of these fundraising events will be considered extraordinary income. Parishioners can consider contributions to the fundraising events as part of their 2% for a charity of their choice, above and beyond the recommended 8% tithe to the parish.

### **Am I expected to start tithing 10% of my income now?**

Sacrificial giving is just that – generosity discerned in prayer. Many Catholics give less than 1% of their income to their parish. Others start at 2%, growing to the 10% in phases. Catholics are encouraged to learn more about stewardship, to pray about how they can more fully engage in their parish, and to discern as a family how they can reach the biblical standard of tithing 10%.

The diocesan recommendation is that 8% of your income is given to your parish and 2% to other charities that you determine. It may take some time for you to adjust your family budget to a model of sacrificial giving; just remember God can never be outdone in generosity.

### **Why should the diocese decide how much of my money goes to the USCCB or to the Vatican?**

As Catholics, we profess we are one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church. The tithing model honors that central aspect of Catholicism.

### **Who decided these policies?**

Feedback from our pastors and parishioners has been vital for the Stewardship Office to develop policies to encourage a stewardship way of life.

Both policies were developed within an atmosphere of collaboration. A meeting of several pastors of parishes in the first two cohorts for the transition to a stewardship way of life provided a robust discussion and essential input.

The Office of Stewardship, the Bishop's Cabinet and groups of consulting pastors and Catholic school principals provided a draft to the Diocesan Presbyteral Council and the Diocesan Finance Council. Both bodies provided feedback and ultimately recommended the formal promulgation of these decrees.

Both policies were promulgated for one year, with a reevaluation at the end of the year. We will continue to receive feedback throughout this year.