



WHY DO I GIVE?

by the Reverend John E. Shields

"WHY DO I GIVE" has been the title of several articles wherein parishioners and clergy have shared with the congregation their unique perspectives on giving. I've always appreciated the fact that those folks would share their thoughts on such an important and personal issue. I did not know how much I should have appreciated it until being asked to write an article myself.

Probably like most of you my own understanding and motivation for giving has changed over the years. I grew up in a home where both parents set a strong example of giving to the church. They were very active in the church and they were truly committed Christians. Certainly, their example made an important impression me. So I suppose that I've always had a sense that I am supposed to give, so I do. Let's call it duty.

As the years have passed and I have gotten older (I'm not sure I've become more mature) my sense of 'why give?' has changed. Exposure to human problems and need -- causes that have touched my heart and roused my spirit have led me to the conclusion that giving is a way of being a part of the solution. My gift may not solve the problems, but it will help in the effort to get the problem solved.

Finally, it seems that on the whole I have lived a blessed and happy life. I have, in comparison to most of the world, an abundance of blessings -- material, emotional and spiritual. Much of my good fortune is the result of grace and good luck. This has led to the conclusion that giving is a natural response to the joy of my blessings.

WHY DO I GIVE? For me there are three reasons:

DUTY • BEING A PART OF THE SOLUTION • GRATITUDE IN JOY

“Stewardship is one of the root concepts in Christian ethics, based on the recognition that all gifts come from God and must be used to his glory, and applying equally to all types of gifts, whether of money, time or talents.” (Dictionary of Christian Ethics, John Macquarrie, editor)

STEWARDSHIP PRAYER

Heavenly Father, we offer our praise and thanksgiving for all of the blessings you have bestowed upon us, mindful that all we have are but gifts from you. We offer special thanks for the most precious gift of salvation through the life, death and resurrection of your Son, Jesus Christ, and for his church, your holy community of worship, specifically St. Paul's Episcopal Church. May we always remember those responsible for its daily operation and our role in support of that operation. By your grace, help us to know the joy of returning and sharing our blessings. Enable us to seek your will and loving purpose as we build your community through the same Jesus Christ our Lord, Amen.

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