

For the past two months, in virtually all the homilies I've given, our **CALL TO DISCIPLESHIP** has been addressed. This weekend I announced another phase—a more structured one—that addresses one aspect of discipleship: our grateful response to God in the area of financial support for the Parish, and I am asking everyone to make a commitment.

I know, I know. As soon as a pastor starts talking about money, for a lot of people a conditioned response seems to kick in. “There the Church goes again, always talking about money.”

Such a comment is very frustrating to me, not *only* because a statement like this is patently untrue (you can't consistently come to Mass here at St. William Parish, read the bulletin, or partake in the many services and activities we offer and honestly claim that), but because it allows such people to conveniently erect a wall against anything that might challenge them to accept their responsibilities, which includes financial support to the Church. If you know of any such persons, please pray for them, and maybe gently steer them to change this unfortunate attitude. If we are to grow as disciples, we need to respond to all those ways that show we are following Christ: our prayer, our families, our finances, and our service. If I were to neglect mentioning money for fear of those who would criticize, I would be untrue to the **WHOLE** message. The call to discipleship would not be complete..

I also want everyone to clearly understand that I am not asking anyone to give beyond their means. Those who are already giving to the best of their ability in these tough economic times should be held up as an example. I only hope that their witness will encourage others to seriously examine whether their own donations are a fair reflection of their decision to follow Christ.

Sometimes people decide about giving to the Church based on their perception of the Church's need. I can understand that, but it is not really the best basis. The real basis for a disciple's choice about giving is *gratitude* on the part of the giver, not the perceived need of the recipient.

Sure, there is plenty of need for better funding of our Parish's work. The weekly envelope report that we publish, in that regard, is very deceiving, since it might suggest that the “budgeted” amount is all that we “need”. In fact, it only represents what we realistically projected that we would collect! The expense side of the annual budget had to be slashed to make everything fit. We had to put many needs—and serious needs—aside. If you would like me to enumerate them and you think that would be helpful for the Parish in general, let me know, and I could devote a whole column to that topic.

Meanwhile, keep praying for our Parish. And keep praying that more and more of our Parishioners will respond to **THE CALL TO DISCIPLESHIP**.

In Jesus,  
Fr. Michael