



Money Ministers

Ed and Jane Cordick, Rose and Ed De Sanctis, Linda and Ev Katz, Don and Kathy Schwanke currently have one major activity in common — they are all money ministers in the Diocese of Syracuse.

They don't pass the basket at Mass; don't count the Sunday day collection; don't write checks, pay bills or supervise investments; don't maintain parish books.

But they do speak and preach about money in Catholic churches throughout Upstate New York.

These four couples, trained in an approach begun by a volunteer lay person from Detroit 27 years ago, conduct sacrificial giving or tithing programs. Each one can give an hour-long presentation as part of the educational effort which is the essence of this concept. Each one likewise has been prepared to preach a 15-20 minute homily during weekend Masses at situations in which all parishioners are not able to attend the other sessions.

The basic principles proclaimed in the program are: Give back to the Lord in gratitude a share of the gifts God has given you; Make that gift a sacrifice, something which hurts a little, has a bite to

Fr. Joseph M. Champlin



Our Church Family

it; Wrap it up like a present in your church envelope, and drop this into the basket during the presentation of gifts at Mass; Look to the biblical norm of tithing as a model, dividing that ten percent of your gross income into two sections: 5 percent for your parish and the other 5 percent for the world's poor, which covers all personal charities, the missions, Catholic school tuition and diocesan appeals.

These four couples teach and preach this message as volunteers, not as professional fund raisers. They receive only gas money and baby sitting costs.

Their efforts are supplemented by printing materials, including St. Ignatius' Prayer for Generosity, either distributed at Sunday Masses or mailed to parishioners by a local church envelope firm.

The program itself operates quite simply.

Three hour-long presentations are given a week apart. The concluding evening is a pledge night in which participants write down the amount per week they promise the Lord. On the final weekend, those not at this final session have an opportunity to make their pledges at liturgies. As follow-up, a month later those who have not pledged are contacted, and every four months reports are sent to parishioners on how their giving corresponds to their pledges.

Our experience in four very different parishes rather conclusively proves the sacrificial giving or tithing program produces remarkable results.

After but two months, the Sunday collection in a tiny rural parish has moved from \$499 to \$1,050; in an older, fixed-income city church, from \$1,900 to \$2,900; in a congregation within a small city from \$1,600 to \$2,000; in a large, affluent suburban church, from \$4,100 to \$5,500.

More importantly, this approach spiritualizes giving, is not based on the needs of the parish but the income of the parishioners, eliminates most extra collections or special envelopes, lifts financial burdens from the priests' shoulders and removes money talk from the pulpit except at a yearly renewal of pledges.

A Little of This and Some of That . . .

—The New York Times ran a feature story recently about the inconsistencies of people dealing with inflation. They balk, for example, when fresh orange juice (purchased at a corner stand) goes up 25 cents a glass, but never blink an eye when the price of caviar doubles.

I know the feeling. Coffee at \$3.99 a pound sends me in the other direction, but I've paid close to \$5 a cup for that first brew of the morning a couple of times. They call it room service and the fact that a wrinkled Danish and a glass of tepid juice plus the morning paper come with it does not mitigate the crime.

—The Little Dears are settling into summer routine nicely, thank you. Three mornings a week I come down to the family room to find more bodies and sleeping bags than we have children draped over couches, chairs and rug. The rules set down are fairly simple. No turning to the R movie on cable after I go to bed, no playing barber (I know a girl who went home from a slumber party once with a crew cut) and NO feeding the dog onion dip.

Sarah Child



All in the Family

—Definition of a good hair stylist: One who can cut your hair without your husband's realizing it is shorter, not to be confused with a bad hair stylist who takes the money and sends your son home with longer locks than Farah Fawcett You Know Who.

—Doris Slocum, my faithful and generous correspondent from Groton, suggests in her latest note that I write a zucchini cookbook and to get me started has sent me her own files filled with ammunition.

I may have run into a snag, Doris. My test panel

is starting to turn up its collective nose at this delectable treat and our own zucchini are only beginning to produce.

—Loretta Brooks writes that when she returned from vacation she started going back through old issues of the Courier-Journal and came across a reference I made in one of the columns about a new cookbook from Tennessee which not only gives information on how to cook up such delights as Vinegar Pie but offers hints as well on how to clean certain items, such as marble. Would I share the information she wants to know. Here it is Loretta, but proceed cautiously since a note at the bottom of the page says the editors assume no responsibility for the success or failure of these tips.

Clean marble with two parts common soda, one part pumice stone and one part finely powdered chalk; sift and mix with water. Rub well over the marble and stains will be removed. Then wash with soap and water.

Sounds very similar to the Vinegar Pie recipe.

Parenting Society's Children

A recent news account told of a group of young boys who fell into an excavation basement at a downtown construction site. One was killed, the rest seriously hurt. The tragic part of the story was that several adults admitted passing by, recognizing the inherent danger of their play, and walking on because they weren't their children and they didn't want to intrude.

Those who study families tell us that one of the chief differences between rearing a family in the recent past and today is that we no longer take a communal responsibility in rearing society's children. Therefore, parents have to be with their children at all times to insure their safety. Parents can't count on nearby adults to tell their children to get out of dangerous places, to stop bullying or vandalizing, or generally to behave according to society's rules.

Dr. Raymond Leidig of the Colorado Department of Institutions spoke to this in an address before the White House Conference on Families. He said we have to give adults permission to be responsible for the welfare of all children, not just their own. He recounted that when he was a little boy in New York and playing with friends on the sidewalks, if he did something wrong or strayed too close to the street, there were a dozen grandmas leaning on the windowsill ready to call down, "Raymond Leidig, you behave yourself or I'll tell your momma when she gets home."

Dolores Curran



Talks With Parents

Yet, when he cautioned a neighborhood girl against coming too close to his burning leaves, her parents overheard him and said, "Do you always tell other people's kids what to do?"

That's why we're so reluctant to be the responsible adults that a caring society requires in order to rear society's children well. We're afraid of them and their parents. We witness abominable behavior but refuse to say anything about it. A whole movie theater will allow a few loud teens to ruin the movie because anyone who remonstrates will become a target.

Kids on a bus will open a window wide without a thought of the discomfort of the people behind them. Loud transistor radios invade the harmony of public places and nobody asks the pre-teens to turn them down. If the rest of us would openly support the correcting adult, we wouldn't have any problem.

One group that acts responsibly in monitoring other people's children in society is teachers. Recently, my son and I were in a tour with a group of terribly unruly Cub Scouts. Their leaders didn't seem concerned as the boys pushed and shoved but when one jammed into me, I got angry. I grasped them and said, "Hey, you two, that's dangerous." I suspect the leaders glared at me but I didn't care. The gratitude from the others made up for it.

Later, a woman slipped next to me and said, "I'll bet you were a teacher." I laughed and admitted it and she identified herself as one too, saying she had planned to step in on the very next shove.

But teachers and other authority figures shouldn't be the only ones who parent society's children. When parentless kids are misbehaving in the park, breaking into the front of the line, or spoiling a program, we should presume their parents would want us to correct them.

When we see swimming in dangerous places, riding bikes hazardously, and engaging in play that seems harmless to them, we need to risk censure and become caring enough adults to say something to them. Otherwise, we will become like those adults who walked by the children playing in the construction site, too afraid to save their lives by saying a word.