



*Pastor's Office*

February 1, 2011

My Dear Parishioners,

Thank you for your thoughtful comments to my letter included with the January Bridge. Your concern for the well-being of our parish is heartwarming, and I am grateful for your feedback.

At our Sunday liturgies we always have a first collection during Offertory and often a second collection for a worthy need. Please allow me to address some questions and to provide guidance about our first and second collections as we approach our Stewardship Commitment period in late February.

Your donation in the first collection at Offertory is the most important financial responsibility you have to our parish. This offering provides the financial underpinning of our parish. It is the treasure you cheerfully give in gratitude for the blessings you receive from God. This essential gift provides for liturgy, cares for our priests, supports our loving and capable pastoral staff and maintains our buildings and grounds. The first collection, which gathers your gifts, keeps our parish alive. Our first collection is the financial foundation for all that we do in and through our Catholic faith at St. Bridget Parish.

Every parishioner should participate in the first collection according to your pledge made during the Annual Stewardship Campaign. You should be faithful and consistent in your giving whether you choose to contribute weekly or monthly. If you are away from St. Bridget due to travel or because of weather, I ask that you make up for those offerings you missed as soon as you return, as we count on your consistent giving. I have asked our administrative staff to provide our parishioners with thoughtful reminders to meet and remain current with their stewardship pledges.

Our second collections are important, too. Through them, we help meet the needs of our universal church, we help our local community, and we help the larger faith community. A number of second collections throughout our church year are national collections set by the U. S. Council of Catholic Bishops. These include the Catholic Campaign for Human Development; Peter's Pence; and the Retired Religious Sisters, Brothers and Priests.

Other second collections are set by our Diocese. They include Catholic Charities, Catholic Relief Services, and the Bishop's Annual Appeal. And, St. Bridget sets some second collections for good causes including for the parish's poor and needy, Christmas Sharing, Little Sisters of the Poor, and the Catholic Heart Work Camp.

Each of the second collections are important and worthy of your donations. After you fulfill your pledge in support of our parish through your first offering, you should participate in the second collections. It is important to know that your stewardship pledge is your commitment to the first collection. The contributions you make to the second collections are recorded in your total giving at St. Bridget, but are not considered as donations in fulfillment of your stewardship pledge. They are immediately forwarded for their intended use beyond our parish.

Our Liturgy Committee will consider changes to how first and second collections are taken within Mass. Perhaps the second collection will occur immediately after the first collection. This will allow us a short moment or two to state what the second collection is and how it is important. We will look at increasing our communications about the second collections.

I would be remiss not to mention our E-Giving capability at St. Bridget. For many of our parishioners, E-Giving provides a simple, straightforward way to make their donations to both the first and second collections. E-Giving allows one to set up weekly or monthly transfers of funds for parishioners' offerings, and donations may be made by bank draft or credit card payment. It is good for the parish as it ensures your donations are received even if you are away from St. Bridget. Our parishioners using E-Giving strongly endorse it and I wish many more parishioners would use this convenient and reliable method. Our staff can assist you in beginning to use E-Giving.

Some parishioners using E-Giving are a bit uncomfortable when the basket is passed at first and second collections as they have nothing to place in the offertory basket. You may simply write an "E" on your offertory envelope and place that in the basket. You may find that more comfortable and it will continue to provide an excellent example to the youth in our parish that cheerful giving is an important part of our faith and liturgy.

As I close, I thank you from the bottom of my heart for your generosity, your understanding, and your love for St. Bridget Parish. I am grateful for all you do and give to our parish. The response to our upcoming Stewardship Campaign is already encouraging. I thank you for your prayers, and I always welcome your thoughts.

Sincerely in Christ,



Rev. Monsignor William H. Carr  
Pastor, St. Bridget Catholic Church  
Richmond, Virginia