



# NOTES FROM THE PASTOR

## “BLIND GUIDES”

*Jesus Said: “You hypocrites, well did Isaiah prophesy about you when he said: ‘this people honors me with their lips while their hearts are far from me, in vain do they worship me teaching their ways as human precepts!’ IF A BLIND PERSON LEADS A BLIND PERSON, BOTH WILL FALL INTO THE PIT”*



### **Blind Guides: The Two Fold Curse of Scandal**

When Jesus warns the apostles to be careful of the ways of the Pharisees it is because their hearts are far from God and their focus is on the appearance of righteousness. The performances of rituals and practices “look like” how one should live when they love God and moral truth but yet interiorly they have hearts of stones. Looks, as we know, are deceiving and one can get caught up imitating the example of the outward signs and never really grow closer to God. Jesus warns us that the reciting of words and babbling in prayer does not win favor with God but doing the heavenly Father’s will is the sign of true discipleship.

### **Eyes can fool us!!!**

The first kind of scandal that a blind guide can perform is that for which we are so familiar. When a respectable person who leads others, such as a priest, parent, coach or teacher in accomplishing integrity and holiness acts against the very principles and are exposed as a fraud, it causes scandal. There is an outrage against the person, an immediate loss of respect and the feeling of disillusionment. The sin of Scandal is that those who have followed into the pit of their deception become angry and bitter against the desire to even try to believe in moral truth or in anyone who represents that truth. The result is that people walk away from the church family and institutions that these people represented falsely.

In this case the “pit” is deeper than the sin that had occurred in the leaders personal life for it becomes an endless fall into sarcasm, mistrust, abandonment and disillusionment of all that is good. The damage can be irreconcilable and morally destructive.

One could easily point to the recent priest scandal as a perfect example of the priest being a blind guide, deceiving his people, with the outward signs of holiness while all along his heart so far from God and Truth. This has caused both victims and faithful followers who have become aware of the atrocity to fall into a pit of deceit that they will never climb out from nor recover spiritually.

Can you blame them for walking away from the Church, the trust of priest or even a belief of a loving God? How, now being thrust into such a deep pit, can they come back to truth and recognize the priest is not the reason that they loved God but it is the ministry of the priesthood that is good and sacred? **These lost souls are as well an atrocity!**

Fraudulent doctors, self-serving teachers, drug addicted coaches and family wrecking spouses who enter into marital affairs also push faithful patients, students, athletes and children into the pit of the abyss of disillusionment of all that is good. Scandal is the consequence of one believing that they are their own “God” and the people of their care are collateral damage to their kingdom.



## Distorted Lenses



The second kind of scandal seems to be more subtle but also is the fault of a blind guide with a different spin. While the first type of scandal causes the gasping for breath reality of being duped by a trusted leader the second comes in the form of a “pass” to employ improper, less morally damning, actions of one who is revered in the ways of the Lord and Truth. A priest smoking cigarettes; an out of shape obese physical trainer; a cursing filthy mouthed loving dad or a HBO watching babysitter to just name a few. These actions in and alone are usually seen as unacceptable behavior for the commoner but when enacted by a respected person leads to the same leniency and permission for the follower. Why can't I smoke if Father John does, or curse cause dad does or eat a pizza while training!! This kind of scandal can weaken the much-needed resolve for a person who is seeking conformity to Love and Truth. If it is okay for the leader then it is okay for me. The pit may not be as dark or deep but it does cause concern for the acceptance of other vices over Virtue!

SOLUTION – Gaining proper sight here is to remember why parents, priests, coaches, teachers and doctors are respected all awhile realizing they are human and infallible in life. Jesus warned the disciples against taking on titles such as Rabbi, Father or master for there is only one true leader with 20/20 vision, Christ the Lord!! So when you are a leader and are asked to act in the name of Christ then be sure of this:

***The harmonious union of heart and action is one that must start with the heart and spill out into action. Offering devotional prayers, spending time in spiritual reading, attending Sacred Mass and Holy Communion and frequent reception of the Sacrament of Reconciliation disposes one's heart to the love of Christ's heart and then actions, words and deeds are one in the same with His will. With clear focus and 20/20 vision guides will be only guides and not those who lead you into a pit.***

## A GUIDE TO GRATEFUL GIVING



Thanking God for gifts given is completed not with a prayer and a smile but with returning of the gift in service of others.... This is where sacrificial giving becomes a way of recognizing God as the giver of all that is good and the true provider of our “daily bread”. Jesus said for those who much has been given .... Much is expected in return....

**SO HOW MUCH IS EXPECTED?** - This is the age old question... It would be easy to come up with a dollar amount based on the average gift given by the average family, but this would not reflect our individual gifts accurately enough... if fact it would be comparing ourselves unfairly. So giving according to what you can afford or based on averages does not reflect sacrificial giving in its truest sense.

The best approach would be that which we see described in the bible... and that is known as “**Tithing**”. This means that one give 10% of their current income. It is believed that this amount does not simply reflect a gift from our surplus but a gift from our need. Tithing does not compare us to the average but to the trusting love of God... God has provided for me and he will continue to do so as I give back in a trusting way. When we take this approach we are living the very words of Christ: “**Where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.**” LK 12:34. Our heart is on the kingdom of heaven... it is in this that we trust not what we can reap for ourselves in the present world.

As difficult as it may seem... it is the challenge that is laid out before us all as by Christ... “To leave all behind and follow.”

## TAKING A STEP

For most Catholics, and perhaps many Christians, tithing (10 percent of current income) would represent a substantial leap from their current level of church and charitable giving. So let us take one step at a time towards tithing making it a realistic move toward that ideal. Here is how it works....

**Note: Of the 10% which you give 5% should be given to your local church and the 5% to other charitable works of your choice.**

- Identify your current income level on the chart below.
- Move to the right on the same line to determine the amount you currently give weekly to the parish.
- Move directly up the chart to identify the % of income your current level of parish giving represents.
- Consider moving a column or two to the right as a step toward the tithing goal.
- Make a promise to yourself that you intend to maintain this new level of sacrificial giving during the next year.
- To reinforce your good “taking a step” intention, and to help the parish in its financial planning, mark the amount you intended to sacrifice on the enclosed commitment form.

CURRENT HOUSEHOLD				WEEKLY GIFT TO THE PARISH								
Hourly	Weekly	Monthly	Yearly	1%	1.5%	2%	2.5%	3%	3.5%	4%	4.5%	5%
<b>\$4.80</b>	<b>\$190</b>	<b>\$835</b>	<b>\$10,000</b>	\$2.00	\$3.00	\$4.00	\$5.00	\$6.00	\$7.00	\$8.00	\$9.00	\$10.00
<b>7.20</b>	<b>290</b>	<b>1,250</b>	<b>15,000</b>	3.00	4.00	6.00	7.00	9.00	10.00	12.00	13.00	14.00
<b>9.60</b>	<b>385</b>	<b>1,665</b>	<b>20,000</b>	4.00	6.00	8.00	10.00	12.00	13.00	15.00	17.00	19.00
<b>12.00</b>	<b>480</b>	<b>2,085</b>	<b>25,000</b>	5.00	7.00	10.00	12.00	14.00	17.00	19.00	22.00	24.00
<b>14.50</b>	<b>575</b>	<b>2,500</b>	<b>30,000</b>	6.00	9.00	12.00	14.00	17.00	20.00	23.00	26.00	19.00
<b>16.75</b>	<b>675</b>	<b>2,915</b>	<b>35,000</b>	7.00	10.00	13.00	17.00	20.00	24.00	27.00	30.00	34.00
<b>19.25</b>	<b>770</b>	<b>3,335</b>	<b>40,000</b>	8.00	12.00	15.00	19.00	23.00	27.00	31.00	35.00	38.00
<b>24.00</b>	<b>960</b>	<b>4,165</b>	<b>50,000</b>	10.00	14.00	19.00	24.00	29.00	34.00	38.00	43.00	48.00
<b>29.00</b>	<b>1,155</b>	<b>5,000</b>	<b>60,000</b>	12.00	17.00	23.00	29.00	35.00	40.00	46.00	52.00	58.00
<b>33.50</b>	<b>1,345</b>	<b>5,835</b>	<b>70,000</b>	13.00	20.00	27.00	34.00	40.00	47.00	54.00	61.00	67.00
<b>38.50</b>	<b>1,540</b>	<b>6,665</b>	<b>80,000</b>	15.00	23.00	31.00	38.00	46.00	54.00	62.00	69.00	77.00
<b>43.50</b>	<b>1,730</b>	<b>7,500</b>	<b>90,000</b>	17.00	26.00	35.00	43.00	52.00	61.00	69.00	78.00	87.00
<b>48.00</b>	<b>1,925</b>	<b>8,335</b>	<b>100,000</b>	19.00	29.00	38.00	48.00	58.00	67.00	77.00	87.00	96.00
<b>57.70</b>	<b>2,308</b>	<b>10,000</b>	<b>120,000</b>	23.00	35.00	46.00	58.00	69.00	81.00	92.00	104.00	115.00
<b>72.10</b>	<b>2,855</b>	<b>12,500</b>	<b>150,000</b>	29.00	43.00	58.00	72.00	87.00	101.00	115.00	130.00	144.00