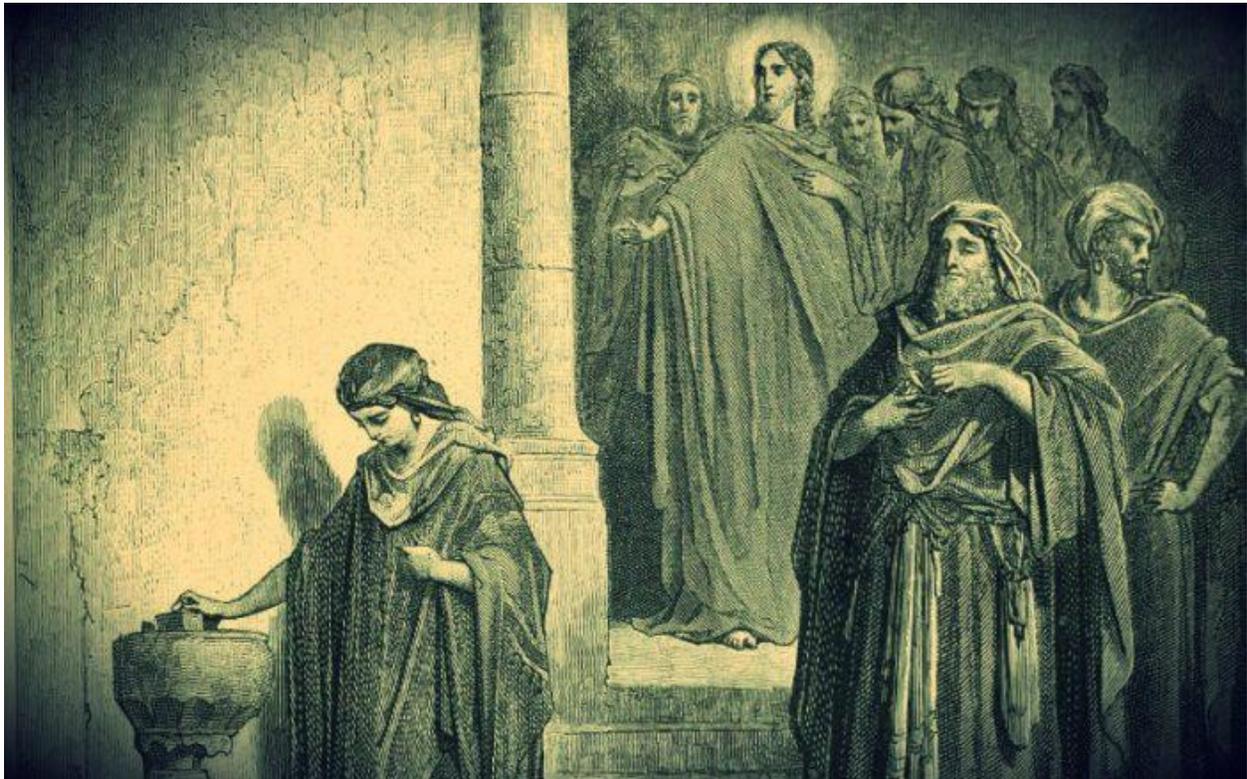


## If You're Not Financially Supporting the Church, You're Committing a Sin

by Brantly Milligan - Oct 16, 2016



*The Widow's Mite / Public Domain, Wikipedia*

The Holy Catholic Church has the most important mission of any organization in the history of the world: to preach the soul-saving Gospel of Jesus Christ. She alone has the fullness of the truth and means of salvation so that people can avoid hell and gain heaven.

Carrying on this mission, of course, takes earthly resources. Those of us who, by God's gratuitous grace, have received the gift of faith and a new life in Jesus Christ, should naturally want to generously provide what we can to support this desperately important work.

But most Catholics don't. And that's a big problem.

I once worked at a parish, and have attended other parishes that published data on giving to the parish, and I've always been blown away at the number of Catholics registered at a parish who give absolutely nothing. In all the parishes where I've seen data, the vast majority of the money to support the parish's work comes from a relatively small number of faithful people. (If you are already a part of this small minority, then great! This article isn't for you.)

Of course, there are some people so poor they can't give anything, or can't give very much. Though I think all Catholics should try to give *something* (think of the [Widow's Mite!](#)), they can find other ways to support their parish.

But that isn't the case for the vast majority of Catholics: most who aren't giving certainly could be giving, but simply don't.

**This is a big problem for at least four reasons:**

**First**, it shows that most Catholics don't really believe the faith. As I explained above, the need to support the work of the Church naturally flows from an understanding of the gravity of the Church's work. If a person doesn't already see that, it means they're missing something essential.

**Second**, because Catholics who don't support the Church are breaking one of the [Precepts of the Church](#) (not to be confused with the [Ten Commandments](#)). Simply understanding the gravity of the Church's work should be enough to compel people to support her work, but because of our human weakness, the Church has made giving support an obligation of Church law.

According to the [Catechism](#), the fifth precept of the Church is "You shall help to provide for the needs of the Church." This means, the *Catechism* explains, "that the faithful are obliged to assist with the material needs of the Church, each according to his own ability." (CCC 2043) This obligation is also given in the [Code of Canon Law](#) (CIC 222).

In other words, if you aren't supporting the Church in some way, but know you should, you are committing a grave sin.

I include "but know you should" because true ignorance can reduce culpability. I wouldn't be surprised if most Catholics haven't even heard of the Precepts of the Church (for which their pastors are liable). But if you are a practicing Catholic and were not aware of this requirement, now you know.

**Thirdly**, because Catholics who don't support the Church are missing out on the spiritual benefits of giving. Everything ultimately belongs to God anyway. Everything we have is a gift from Him – even if we think we earned it.

Giving back to the Church of God is a way for us to not only affirm that we believe this but to demonstrate it with a concrete action and build virtue in ourselves. And it teaches us that God, not money, is our true source of life. If you find it hard to part with your money, it means you have some virtue-building to do.

**Lastly**, because many parishes are severely hampered in the service they could be providing to the Church and their communities. If all Catholics, or even just most Catholics, actually gave significantly to their parishes, think of all the charitable and evangelical work that could be done!

You can't really complain that old parishes are closing, that Catholic school tuition is too high, or that the Church needs to be doing more to help the poor, if you're not giving significantly to the Church. The money doesn't come from no where.

Of course, money isn't always spent wisely by the clergy (for which they will have to give an accounting before God one day), but a lot more good could be done than is being done now.

### **Okay, so how much should a person give?**

Great question. Neither the *Catechism* nor the *Code of Canon Law* prescribe a certain amount or percentage, just that all Catholics are obligated to support the Church "each according to their ability."

And that's not a loop hole to get out of giving something significant, by the way. The freedom Christ gives us from the Old Law is *not* so we can do *less*, but to push us to do *more*. Bare-minimum Christianity isn't very Christian.

The traditional 10% number comes from the Old Testament, when God commanded the Israelites to give 10% of their produce and income for supporting the work of the priests. While not required by Church law, many people see 10% as a good target.

If you're already supporting the Church, thank you for all that you do. If you aren't, please prayerfully consider how much you should be giving.

But know, for the sake of the Church and your soul, that not giving anything isn't an option