

We're a couple days out from the elections. I'm not going to tell you how to vote (but do vote!). But I do want to look at the act of voting itself. I have to say I actually miss going to the polling place to vote. Perhaps the all mail-in voting is more efficient, etc. but I believe something is lost when we don't vote together as a public, communal act. I remember going to the local elementary school on that Tuesday in November, talking to the people running the polling place, getting my ballot, going into the voting booth along with that elderly woman and that businessman in a hurry on the way to work, dropping the completed ballot in the box, getting my little "I voted" sticker to wear all day.

I feel there is something healthy for democracy and for the community in voting together. Our society already emphasizes too much our individual interests at the expense of our role in the community, whether that community is the family, the neighborhood, the church, or the country.

But even with those regrets, a couple weeks before Election Day I sat down at my table with my ballot and Voter's Guide and did my civic duty. Even if it wasn't as nice as going to a polling place, it still made me feel good. And that's what I want to talk about today – the pleasure that comes with fulfilling one's responsibility. The best way I can describe it is that when I vote I feel virtuous. I feel like a grown up.

I'm not sure we recognize and honor this pleasure enough. Responsibility probably isn't associated with pleasure very often. Acting responsibly isn't one of those Whoopie Pleasures. It's not ecstasy. But acting responsibly for the sake of something larger than myself can bring a subtle, but very real joy.

This is **Stewardship Weekend**. You've been very generous in the past, so I'm going to keep it short and to the point. This is the time each year when we

think about all that God has given and entrusted to us. We have been given different amounts, but we are all entrusted by God with His possessions in some way. What do we do with them?

Here I want to come back to the need to act responsibly in life. Being mature means doing what we need to do for the sake of others, acting like a grown up. If I have kids, I feed and clothe them. If I have elderly parents, I take care of them. If I have a job, I do it well, as promised. In terms of stewardship, it means doing our part to maintain the community of our parish. So...if Sacred Heart is our church we're on to help support it financially, and through our volunteering. Contributing our share of the cost of maintaining Sacred Heart is like voting – I don't expect giving that weekly or monthly gift to be an ecstatic moment, but it's virtuous, something we need to do.

Our parish is coming back to post-Covid life -- activities, services, and groups are expanding (Knights are going to host an Italian Dinner in December). With that comes expenses. That is why I'm asking you to fill out a commitment card today telling us how much you will contribute this year to help keep Sacred Heart going. I also ask that you increase that amount a little from last year. If your financial situation changes during the year just call our office and we can adjust your commitment down – or up.

A letter was mailed to all parishioners along with a stewardship pledge card, and a QR code for online giving (there are extra pledge cards in the pews). Even if you are already giving online, please fill out the pledge card to help keep our records up to date. Speaking about online giving: one thing Covid taught us was the importance of online giving to a parish. If you are not giving online, please

consider it. If you scan the QR code with your phone it will take you to our OSV website, where you can create an account for on-line giving.

If you are already giving on-line, take this opportunity to re-visit the site to confirm or bump up the amount you are giving – and update relevant information.

Similarly, if Sacred Heart is your church, you also need to volunteer in some way around the parish. That is another way we are called to grow the gifts that God has given us and become a mature Christian.

We as a society don't like to commit – it goes back that individualistic thing again. But fearing commitment is immature. Being an adult means committing to other people for the good of the whole, and that brings its own pleasure – and (here's the beauty of it) our own individual growth. I've no problem asking for your contributions to Sacred Heart because I know that doing this not only gives the satisfaction of carrying our own weight, but it also builds up our Christian discipleship, because it's another way we commit to our relationship with Jesus.

God gives to each of us according to our own abilities. He expects us to give back according to our abilities for the increase of His Kingdom. Please commit to Him through Stewardship and know the satisfaction that comes with being a mature Disciple of Christ.