
To reflect on our sacrificial giving is a chance to put "money" and "God" and "me" on the same plane, where these words actually belong, without embarrassment or apology, without guilt or fear. The invitation to continue giving generously is also an invitation to discover anew the grace and generosity that God showers on each of us – from birth to death and beyond.

The challenge to students and residents is to decide on a level of giving that makes sense for your life-situation and that truly reflects your gratefulness to God for the gifts you have received.

We invite you to prayerfully reflect on the gift of treasure that you are able to share with St. Thomas Aquinas. The quality of our liturgies, campus ministry, education programs, parish ministries, facilities and outreach to the needy is determined by the support we receive from you.

St. Thomas Aquinas Church
& Catholic Student Center

Ames, Iowa



The Collection Basket

sacrificial giving



*"It's not how much we give but
how much love we put into giving."*

— Mother Teresa



When we commit ourselves to the financial support of the church, something happens in our hearts and we find that we become more connected to and involved in the ministry of the church. One of the reasons people feel that they don't really belong to their local parish is because they have yet to sow into its ministry in a committed and sacrificial way. We need to be supporters and disciples, not bystanders and outsiders.

The money we *put in the basket* is important because without our support the Church's work would suffer or be limited. But that contribution is even more important because we are involving ourselves. We don't just give money — we give ourselves. When our contribution goes into the basket, **we all** visit the parish sick; **we all** teach religious education programs; **we all** share in the administering of the sacraments; **we are all** reaching out to the needy; **we all** counsel the bereaved or frightened; **we are all** campus ministers on the ISU campus.

You know that the practical outcome of your giving is to fund the parish budget (and that's a good thing!), but no one should give primarily to plans, personnel and programs. Give because you are created in the image of a giving God, and giving is an act of praise to God. Give because the resources you have are not yours; your life is a gift, and nothing in your life, including its most potent symbol, money, is exempt from the gospel's scrutiny. Give as a way of asking yourself whether you really trust God to provide for your life once you decide to be generous.

If your sacrificial giving is similar to writing a check at the end of the month to pay your electric bill, rent or phone bill, and then forgetting about it until it is time to write a check again, then your giving is incomplete. Likewise, if you take spare change or a dollar or two from your pocket or wallet for the weekly collection and never notice the difference, your giving is incomplete.

Put your gift in the basket because when you look at your world — when you take seriously its cry for grace and mercy, truth and justice — you want the Church to speak a clear word on God's behalf, to speak it boldly and to keep on speaking. You want STA to exist, to thrive and to extend God's voice into Ames and into the world. You hope against hope that this voice will not be diminished or silenced by the fear that there won't be enough. The fear of not having enough will make us draw inward and hunker down, and it will make our hands close tight. When the hand closes, the heart will close soon afterwards. We believe that STA is not afraid. May we continue to be open-handed and open-hearted.

