

NEW PARISHIONER HANDBOOK

**A Straightforward Guide to the
General Norms and Functions of
Your Catholic Parish**

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PART I

FIRST THINGS FIRST

REGISTRATION

The Parish Bulletin

WHEN a family or individual arrives at a new parish, registration in the parish community is most important. Generally speaking, directives for registration will be provided in the parish Bulletin. The first Sunday you attend liturgy in your new parish, make sure you read the Bulletin, not only to get a feel for the parish community, but also for registration directives.

Importance of Registration

Registration clearly announces your arrival in the parish and enables the parish priest(s) and staff to communicate with you as soon as possible. Opening the lines of communication between parish and family is very important. At the same time, it assures the family and/or individual of full status as a parishioner. This enables parish priest(s) and staff to make available rights and privileges guaranteed by Church law.

SUPPORT FOR YOUR PARISH

Importance

WHILE it is true that supporting one's parish is a precept of the Church, when one thinks of it, being fair or even generous to one's parish makes good sense. We should remember that the local parish functions under the same economic conditions as the parishioners.

Tithing

One can easily gauge where one should be on the issue of the amount of parish support. The rule of thumb based on biblical foundations is that parishioners should tithe, namely, budget a percentage of take-home income for the parish (ten, five, or even two percent).

Half of the percent would go directly to the parish in the weekly collections. An additional half would be budgeted for diocesan-sponsored second collections for a variety of charitable domestic and overseas projects. This latter is, if you will, a very convenient and effective way to exercise our fundamental option for the poor. This second half would also include local and neighborhood charities of choice.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION AND YOUTH MINISTRY

Importance

RELIGIOUS education and youth ministry constitute one of the most important evangelical functions of the modern parish. Enough cannot be said about the serious responsibility for parents to educate their children in the ways of the Faith. This stems from the promise parents and godparents made at the child's baptism.

Responsibility of Parents

Parents are obliged in conscience to take advantage of parish religious education programs. When it comes to youth ministry, this can be a challenge because of the many sports and social activities taking place in their neighborhoods. Nonetheless, youth ministry in any parish becomes successful in direct proportion to the amount of time, interest, and concern displayed by the parents of parish young people.

Begins at Home

Parish religious educators form a partnership with parents in the formation of their