

Automated Giving...

It's All the Rage!

Revised from *Connections*
Volume 5 Issue 1

Meeting today's people in today's world. We as a church need to be more conscious of the world around us and the people who live in it. We have stressed this concept in many areas including mailings, flyers and "advertisements," the use of e-mail, visual media and websites, and now Automated Giving for the weekly Offertory!

Offering the option of Automated Giving for the weekly collection helps parishes continue to foster responsible financial stewardship among parishioners. One of the principles of good financial stewardship involves planning the gifts that are to be shared. Participating in Automated Giving is one good way that parishioners can enact their financial stewardship plan each year.

It is a reality in today's world that not everyone attends Mass each week. This is true for a variety of reasons. Automated Giving ensures that the parish receives the intended gift on a regular basis as planned by the parishioner.

Here are a few more benefits:

- ▶ The more people that use Automated Giving, the more reliable a parish's revenue stream will be for the weekly Offertory.
- ▶ As more parishioners opt for Automated Giving, data entry by parishes for the regular collections will be less time consuming.
- ▶ Shared gifts from Automated Giving are significantly more secure than cash gifts. For example, when largely promoted, the use of Automated Giving minimizes the physical cash on hand in a rectory/parish office.

Some have expressed a concern about losing the symbolism of the ritual action of the Offertory for those who choose Automated Giving. Provisions for this should be made so people can still participate, and we have several ideas about this. For example: if you choose to continue envelope

usage, a checkbox or other marking can be added to

indicate Automated Giving right on the envelope. Even better, plastic cards with a stewardship message can be created and picked up before Mass by those who participate in Automated Giving and then placed in the collection during the Offering of the Gifts. (The cards can then be recycled for the following weeks.) There are still other solutions to allow people to responsibly plan their stewardship of financial resources and maintain the integrity of the Offertory ritual.



"...in order to reach the people in today's world, we need to use the means of today's world."

Automated Giving is not as scary as you may think! All you need is a plan, and the first step is to check with your bank. Each bank's capacity, procedures and fees may differ. It is important that you understand how your bank goes about helping you to facilitate an Automated Giving program. You may also want to look into a third party company. Services and fees differ, so do your research and make informed choices for your parish. *(Representatives will be on hand to share their services and answer questions at our "Back to Basics" event with Msgr. Joe Champlin. See visit www.stewardshipli.org/lead.html for more information.)*

Automated Giving for the parish offertory is not for everyone, but then again, neither were checks at one time! (Believe it or not, when paper checks first came out, there was tremendous resistance from most people!) We are simply suggesting that this be an option presented to your parishioners. Remember, in order to reach the people in today's world, we need to use the means of today's world. Becoming a parish that develops and implements an Automated Giving plan is *one way* to do just that!

If you would like a copy of our helpful guide, "Developing a Parish Plan for Automated Giving," please give us a call at 516-379-4055 x3 or visit www.stewardshipli.org/lead.html (scroll down to "Automated Giving Program"). This resource is filled with helpful information on how you can develop an Automated Giving plan in your parish.

