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Cathedral WEEKLY



A NEW TEACHING WITH AUTHORITY

PREPARING FOR LENT | FATHER CHRISTOPHER A. HOUSE
THE AUTHORITY ON STEWARDSHIP | KATIE PRICE

Cathedral WEEKLY

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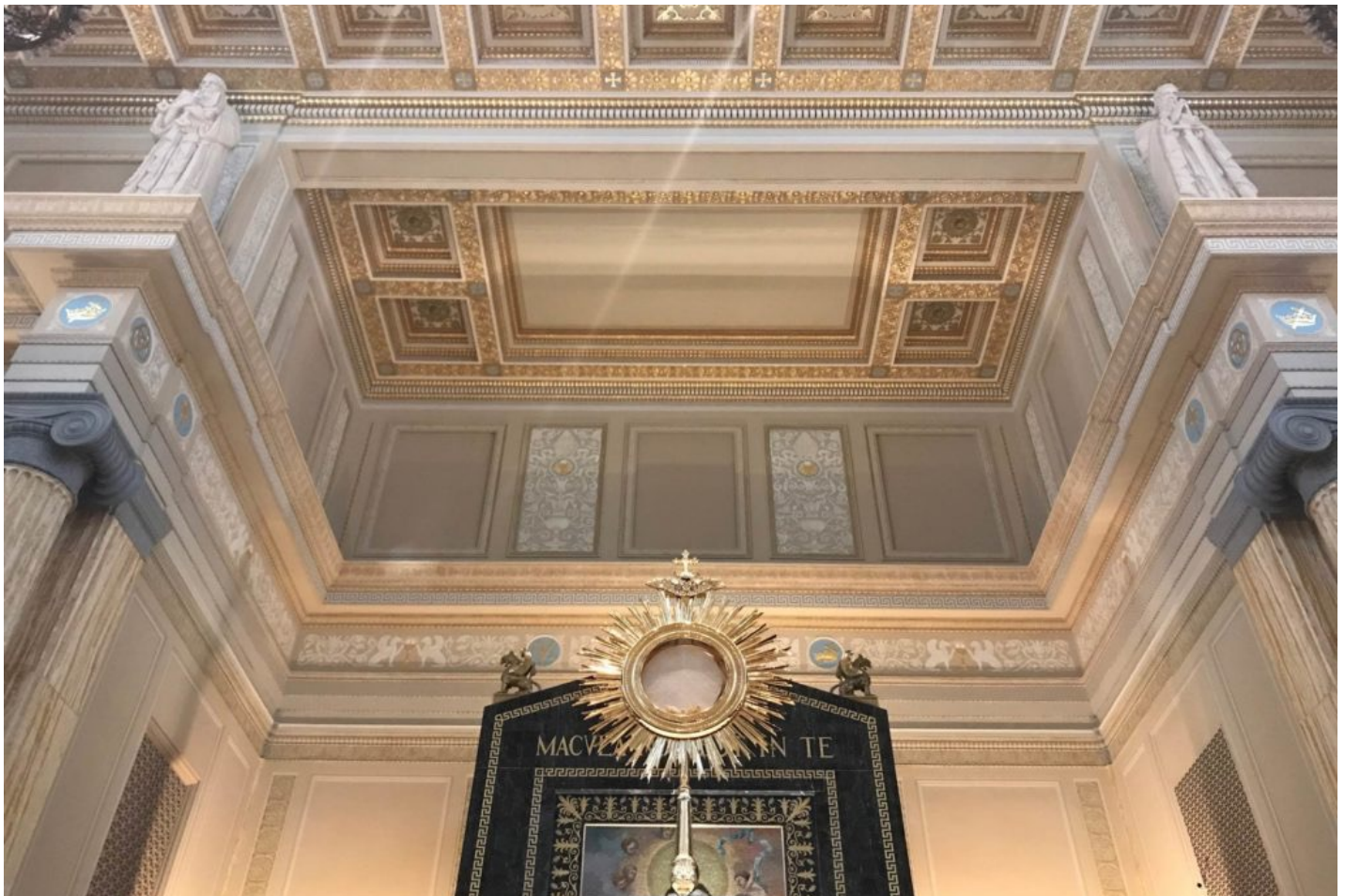
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Preparing for Lent

No, the tagline for this article is not a mistake nor are we jumping the gun because, believe it or not, Ash Wednesday and the beginning of Lent is less than three weeks away. With that in mind, I thought it might be good for us to begin to turn our minds toward this holy season. Like many things in life, what you get

out of Lent will depend on what you put into it and, with Lent, attitude is everything. I will confess that in my younger days that I saw Lent as nothing more than a forty-day slog through drudgery and Friday nights of limited options for going out to eat; once again, attitude is everything. So how do we see/approach Lent?

Lent is a great love story. It may not seem to be so on the surface but what is the season all about? If we first focus on sacrifice, self-denial, and penance then we will be placing our focus in the wrong area. Lent is a great love story because it is about a God, our God, who has a love for us that is unbreakable, unrelenting, and inexhaustible, even though we are guilty of rejecting his love time and time again. The selections that the Church gives us from the Scriptures demonstrate this. We are reminded that God has chosen us to be his own and that he has done this is a wonderful way in his only Son through baptism. Through sin, we have squandered the grace that God has given us through this sacrament, but Lent is about a call to return to that grace again. This is what the first four and a half weeks of the season speak to, from Ash Wednesday until the Fifth Sunday.

The second part of Lent continues to tell that same great love story but recalls how this love of God was perfectly manifested in the Paschal Mystery of Jesus, that is, in his passion, death, and resurrection. The fifth week of Lent transitions us to Holy Week

which ends with the triumph of Easter. It is at this glorious feast that we renew our baptismal promises, having focused on allowing God to renew the grace of that same sacrament in us throughout Lent.

Sacrifice and self-denial are our responses to the gift of God's grace that is offered to us for our renewal. The penances and pious acts that we may choose to adopt are not ends in themselves, but acts by which we seek to root out in our lives what does not belong so that the grace of God may find a welcome place deep in our lives. The same is true about the reception of Ashes on Ash Wednesday. The ashes we receive are nothing more than the ash of old palms that has been blessed. There is nothing mystical about the ashes in themselves. What is important about the ashes is that we receive them as an outward sign of an inner desire to change our lives, to be converted back to right relationship with God. Ashes and pious acts of sacrifice and self-denial must come from a genuine desire to change; if not then these acts are empty.

There are many things that we can do for Lent: add daily Mass to our daily routine, pray the Stations of the Cross, read the Scriptures daily, participate in giving to CRS Rice Bowl, give alms in the special collections for charity, give your time to a good cause, add time for daily prayer, and the list goes on and on. Whatever you may do or not do, make whatever choice you do in the hope of growing deeper in the love that God has for you. Lent is not about what do I have to give up but rather how can I respond to the Lord's call to turn back to him. The first reading of Lent on Ash Wednesday begins God's word spoken through the Prophet Joel: "even now, says the Lord, return to me with your whole heart." Make sure that this coming Lent is about your journey going deep into the grace, love, and mercy that is freely offered to us by our God through Jesus.

Father Christopher House is the Rector-Pastor of the Cathedral and serves in various leadership roles within the diocesan curia.

M A S S I N T E N T I O N S F O R T H E U P C O M I N G W E E K

Monday 29 January

7AM - Mamie Unser (Friend)

5:15PM - Special Intention for Michael Mattox (Ellen Mattox)

Tuesday 30 January

7AM - Special Intention for Poor Souls (Holy Angels Parish)

5:15PM - John "Jack" McCarthy (Don McCarthy)

Wednesday 31 January

7AM - Special Intention for Poor Souls (Holy Angels Parish)

5:15PM - Mamie Unser (Sue Warner)

Thursday 1 February

7AM - Catherine Staab (Brian & Mickey Lauer)

5:15PM - Peter Albanese & Family (Lily Layden Albanese)

Friday 2 February

7AM - Special Intention for Poor Souls (Holy Angels Parish)

5:15PM - Mary Corrigan (Carl Corrigan)

Saturday 3 February

8AM - In Memory of Helene O'Shea (Family)

4PM - For the People

Sunday 28 January

7AM - Bart Rotherham (Betty Rotherham) 10AM - Mercedes & Charles Nesbitt (Kathy Frank) 5PM - Pedro Santiago (Mary Sestak)

DISCIPLESHIP



The Authority on Stewardship

How can someone have authority over my stewardship?

This week in the Gospel we are learning about Jesus' authority. The Gospel tells us how Jesus departed from the traditional habits of the teachers in the synagogues to teaching with new authority. Of course, his authority came from God, but people were "astonished" because this occurred early on in his ministry and was not the norm. In the second part of the Gospel, Jesus expels a demon. But also in non-traditional habit for the day, he does so much quicker, not relying on long ceremonies or ordeals which often did not work. Jesus did not need to rely on ceremonies because He had the authority of God, the same authority we referred to earlier in the Gospel. The positive reaction from the people when He ministered with this authority started to build their trust in the Lord, the same trust we should have with him.

God is the authority in our lives. In fact, while we may personally discern our stewardship practices, he is the real authority that reminds us that all we have, is what is needed. In most instances who has authority also has priority. This authority is linked to a Christian Steward's way of life. Stewards consider giving their first fruits in return for all the gifts they have received from God. Each breath we take, each child we hold, each family member we cherish is a gift. A gift we are to return.

With God at the helm of stewardship, how could anyone go astray? But, as many of us know, we have. The culture seems to have lost the voice of authority. We have lost the authentic sense of giving. We give because we are told to by some other authority. There is a carrot at the end of that gift, not a holiness achieved. For example, in speaking with a group of friends who are parents of young children, I heard of the responsibilities to give time and money to this or that. However, the conversation had a tone of frustration or anger, like "how dare the school ask me to give more." Despite knowing charity is needed to support many of our Catholic missions, we typically need to be reminded to do it, and even asked. I wonder what a community looks like when everyone is freely giving? Giving with no "checkbox" next to their name, giving without condition, giving to the fullest extent, freely, without reminders and without the need to ask for more because more is always given.

Part of an interesting exercise I get to be a part of each week, is watching my daughter "withdraw" from her piggy bank to share what she has with the Parish. In no organized fashion (clearly accounting might not be in our future) she takes a handful of her coins and throws them into her purse, never hesitating or counting. Her measurement is the size of her hand, but in comparison to what she has, that is close to everything. She like many other kids, have a natural ability to give. Often without asking, if they see someone in need they try to help. Sadly, when many adults see someone in need we avoid eye contact and try to go the other way. There is so much we can learn from these little people in our lives. Sure, they may not have the bills to pay,

the responsibilities we have, but they do know the value of giving. Understanding that it was God wants for them and as authority in their lives, they act to please Him first. What authority are we placing before God's in our lives?

Katie Price is the Coordinator of Stewardship for the Cathedral.

A Stewardship Way of Life



STEWARDSHIP of Time

This week, take a look at the people around you at Mass, pray for them. You may not know them personally, but take a moment to pray for someone in the Cathedral family.



STEWARDSHIP of Talents

How are the New Year's resolutions going? Have you signed up for that new class? Have you joined the choir? Become a Lector? Consider this the week to start!



STEWARDSHIP of TREASURE WEEKLY COLLECTION JANUARY 20th and 21st

Envelopes - \$ 5,988.00	Loose - \$ 2,746.10
Maintenance - \$ 262.00	TOTAL: \$ 8,996.10
December EFT: \$ 16,718.00	



Apologetics and the Science of Happiness

"I just want you to be happy."

These words are some of the most confusing in all of man's vocabulary. Through those simple words, many lives have been restored. However, through those same words, many lives have been wrecked. To take an extreme example, imagine a man with an addiction to heroin. The man

who gives him his fix states these words. The man who drags him kicking and screaming to a local rehabilitation program states the exact same words. Yet the end results of both situations are vastly different. As another example, a husband and wife decide to get divorced and they both say to one another, "I just want you to be happy," yet the lives of the children will never be the same.

Philosophers, pastors, teachers, and mentors have echoed man's natural desire for happiness since the beginning of time. In many philosophy 101 classes, regardless of culture, ethnicity, religion, or creed, this is the first principle from which our attempts to make sense of the world flow. The desired end is always the same, but it is often the road to that end that marks the great difference.

Fr. Robert Spitzer once laid out four levels of happiness after reviewing Greek and Christian writers. These are: *laetus*, *felix*, *beatitudo*, and *sublime beatitudo*. *Laetus* is happiness in a thing, perhaps food or a new toy, but this happiness is short-lived and we know it can't completely fulfill us. *Felix* is a happiness based on competition, such as "I am better at math than Lucy," but this happiness is unstable as the constant pursuit to outdo those around us, should we fail, could lead us bitter and broken. *Beatitudo* comes from our altruistic behavior and seeing the good in all those we come into contact with; however, while this happiness is better than *felix*, we might make our happiness contingent upon being everything to everyone. Lastly, *sublime beatitudo* is the full perfection of happiness, particularly the fullness of the transcendentals: beauty, truth, and goodness.

With this in mind, any person in their right mind would naturally ask, "How do I attain the highest level of happiness?" So often we get stuck on the first level of happiness and focus on accruing numerous things, nice houses, big cars, etc., but this has been shown time and again to be a false sense of contentment. As the sage spiritualist Jim Carrey stated, "I think everybody should get rich and famous and do everything they ever dreamed of so they can see that it's not the answer." We've seen the seemingly irrational suicides of men who had every bit of *laetus*, like Chester Bennington and Chris Cornell, who in the eyes of the world ought to have been the happiest men on planet earth. In America, during arguably the most affluent era of history, only 33% say that they are happy overall.

Yet time and again we see the desire for fame, wealth, and honor listed as non-negotiables for a fulfilling life.

The next stages of happiness, *felix* and *beatitudo*, which are certainly steps in the right direction, can still potentially come up short in true, interior fulfillment. *Felix*, for example, can help a man or woman's drive to be excellent in their work and their pursuits. Competition is a healthy passion which can motivate us to do things we never dreamed of. However, it can also lead to an unhealthy fear of our inadequacies and put us in depression. *Beatitudo* is also healthy and a great reminder that we indeed are called to live for others. This sort of happiness can lead people to start soup kitchens or build homes for the homeless, but it has also led to violence in the name of helping the helpless.

I think many of us would agree that we all ought to be aiming for sublime *beatitudo*, and I'm sure many of our readers can easily see the role that a relationship with Christ will play in the growth of our overall happiness; however, with the rise of the *nones* who have very little interest in religion as a source of happiness, how is it that perhaps we can and ought to use this natural desire for happiness to better engage the path of virtue as a first step in the process of evangelization?

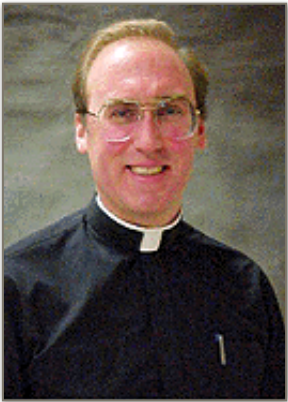
My assertion is that we must have a robust apologetic of happiness.

This apologetic would aim to awaken the senses of the interlocutor to the vast expanse of potential happiness that is offered because of the very fact that they are human. This apologetic could not rest on the esoteric religious experience as many of the "nones" we would encounter have already experienced religion in their own subjective way and have decided to step away. So simply telling them that Jesus is what will make them happy will probably either be brushed off as it reminds them of the childhood religion they left, or it is so abstract of a concept that they have absolutely no context from which to understand the statement.

Rather this apologetic would need to focus on what is important in the lives of those we want to reach. In the book *Churchless*, put together by the folks over at the Barna Group, there's a poll that was taken in which the most important life goals of the unchurched were listed. The top four are: staying in good health, career success, being a good parent, and being comfortable financially. Within those goals, there is a healthy mixture of *laetus*, *felix*, and *beatitudo*. Now what I am suggesting is that as evangelists we need to be able to speak directly to these types of concerns. How can Christianity offer to deepen good health, career success, money, and parenting to such a degree that the religiously unaffiliated cannot ignore it? How is it that making Jesus the Lord of our life practically applies to these concerns and affects them in such a way that the start of evangelization and an introduction to Christ might become a real possibility? How is it that we can begin with *laetus*, *felix*, and *beatitudo* in order to introduce the highest happiness, sublime *beatitudo*, which is Christ Himself as the fulfillment of beauty, truth, and goodness?

...continue on page 7

Tithing



As cited in the Catechism (No. 2043), the Precepts of the Church maintain that each person has the duty to support the material needs of the Church. Of course a person fulfills this obligation according to his abilities. The Code of Canon Law also states, "The Christian faithful are obliged to assist with the needs of the Church so that the Church has what is necessary for divine worship for apostolic works and works of charity end for the

decent sustenance of ministers" (No. 222). However, the Church does not mandate a "tithe" as such of any percentage of income or other resource.

The word tithe comes from the Anglo-Saxon word *teotha* meaning "a tenth." The first mention of a tithe in the Bible occurs in Genesis when Melchizedek, a king and a "priest of God Most High," offered a sacrifice of bread and wine in thanksgiving for Abraham's victory over several enemy kings. As an offering to God, Abraham gave Melchizedek "a tenth of everything." (Confer Genesis 14.) However, this tithe was not seen as initiating some new practice, but rather as fulfilling an established custom. Apparently, one tenth of one's bounty was customarily given to the priests in their service to God.

The Torah laws prescribe the offering of tithes A person offered to God, or "tithed," one-tenth of the harvest of grain of the fields or the produce of fruit of the trees, one-tenth of new pressed wine and oil, and every tithed firstborn animal of herd or flock (Leviticus 23 30-33. Deuteronomy 12:17. 14:22-29). Such tithing recognized that God had graciously bestowed these blessings upon man, and man in return offered a thanksgiving sacrifice of one-tenth of the "first fruits."

The Book of Numbers also records how God prescribed that the Levites, the priestly class of the Jewish people were entrusted with these tithes: "To the Levites I hereby assign all tithes in Israel as their heritage in recompense for the service they perform in the meeting tent" (Number 18:21-24). Therefore, these tithes were contributions offered to the Lord and distributed to the Levites for their support.

Interestingly, the practice of tithing whether as a sacrifice in honor of God or as a tax in payment to a ruler was common among the ancient people of Greece, Rome, Lydia, Arabia, Babylon, and Persia. Some archaeologists suggest that the portion one-tenth constituted the tithe because the number ten was the basis for the numerical system and thereby signified totality. Since God governed totality, any blessing received from it was a gift of God, and an appropriate act of thanksgiving one-tenth-ought to be returned to God.

In the early history of our Church, the priests depended upon the generous support of congregations for their sustenance. This custom was based on the New Testament instruction: Jesus taught the apostles to depend upon charity when He sent them on mission "Provide yourselves with neither gold nor silver nor copper in your belts; no traveling beg. no change of shirt, no sandals no walking staff. The workman after all, is worth his keep. (Mt. 10 10). St. Paul also instructed the early Church

community to provide for the needs of their priests "Do you not realize that those who work in the temple are supported by the temple and those who minister at the altar share the offerings of the altar? Likewise, the Lord Himself ordered that those who preach the gospel should live by the gospel" (I Corinthians 9:13- Such support, of course, was spontaneous and within a person's means.

However, as the Church grew, the Church enacted laws to insure such support, based on the precepts of the Old Testament. The first recorded legislation is found in

a letter of the Bishops assembled at Tours, France in 567 and the canons of the Council of Macon in 585. The Church viewed tithes as in accord with divine law since they were instituted by God Himself. The practice of tithing fluctuated throughout Europe. After the Protestant Reformation and then especially the French Revolution, and the growing secularization of civil government, mandatory tithing fell into disuse.

In the United States, churches have relied on the voluntary contributions of the faithful. Prior to Independence, a different situation existed. During the early colonial period in those areas governed by France and Spain a mandatory "tithing" was sometimes imposed which supported the Catholic Church. In the same way, in the English colonies tax revenue was used to support the Church of England.

Although we may not have a rule of tithing, we do have the duty to support the needs of the Church, whether at the international,



diocesan or parish level. Each of us should evaluate what we do "give back to God" through our support of the Church and charitable organization. For example, we should ask, "Do I give to God each week at least what I spend on entertainment, such as movies? Do I give to God at least one hour's worth of my 40 hour pay check?" St. Paul in his Second Letter to the Corinthians (8:1-7) praised the generosity of the faithful in Macedonia: "In the midst of severe trial their overflowing joy and deep poverty have produced an abundant generosity According to their means — indeed I can testify even beyond their means — and voluntarily, they begged us insistently for the favor of sharing in this service to members of the church. "Each of us should be more of a "tither" than a "tipper" in returning a portion of our bounty back to God.

Father William Saunders is pastor of Our Lady of Hope parish in Potomac Falls, Virginia. He is dean of the Notre Dame Graduate School of Christendom College. The above article is a "Straight Answers" column he wrote for the Arlington Catholic Herald. Father Saunders is the author of Straight Answers, a book based on 100 of his columns, and Straight Answers II.



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The apologetic of happiness would by necessity begin with a recognition of our desire to be happy. Money, health, and being a good parent all stem from our natural desire to live a life of happiness. The beauty of the Christian thing is that the vision of these aspects of human life is that of balance. Do we need to work hard and make money? Yes. Do we need to be concerned with our physical health? Yes. But Christianity deepens our understanding of these goals. It teaches that money is needed to provide but not to fulfill, and that while seeking physical health requires self-discipline and can assist in overall well-being—both excellent goals to attain—the healthiest man alive isn't necessarily the happiest. Christianity does not negate these things. Rather, they give them a deeper meaning and a healthy sense of detachment so that we don't seek these good things as if they were sublime beatitudo itself.

Money, career, and health, all aspects of the first two levels of happiness, can disappear in an instant. We've seen numerous men and women who have these things take their own lives or live in utter depression for years. This isn't to say they aren't important but rather to put them in context. Indeed, these are good and wonderful aspects of human flourishing; but again, they are not something that lasts forever.

One that stands out to me is the desire to be a good parent. Now you are beginning to reach the third level of happiness. In the Ted Talk by Dr. Robert Waldinger, What makes a good life? Lessons from the longest study on happiness, we learn that after seventy-five years of research, they found that one thing is better equipped than most to make us happy: good relationships. He states that good social connections lead to happier and physically healthier lives. The problem is that what we want is a

quick fix. But that isn't the nature of relationships. Relationships are hard work. They require sacrifice and an emptying of our own egos. Community and family life is the foundational principle of a happy life, and I believe that in the necessity of an apologetic of happiness, we need to offer the abstract ideal of human happiness, but then equalize that with the very practical reality of having a deep relationship with those we intend to evangelize.



Climbing the levels of happiness requires us to slowly eschew our own faults and failings, and to recognize that perhaps what we thought made us happy is only the first step. This ladder

can often appear as a difficult climb ahead, so when we use the words, "I just want you to be happy," we need to be viscerally aware of the fact that the happiness we are presenting is going to hurt, in the sense that our egos will be tested, but also restore in the loving embrace of Christ's divine life which can best be found in the sublime beatitudo.

Jared Zimmerer is a Catholic author, speaker, blogger, husband and father of 6 and the Director of Outreach and Mission at Word on Fire Catholic Ministries. He holds a bachelor's degree in Kinesiology, He also holds a Master's Degree in Theology from Holy Apostles College and Seminary.