

Jan. 15, 2017

# They asked me to give? How dare they!

It was a day like any other as I prepared for our monthly meeting here at Catholic Central in midtown Dodge City.

Outside, the sun shown through the clouds. Somewhere a dog barked--perhaps in warning of what was to come. I looked out the window. The dog was looking directly at me.

If I had known what I was to encounter at the monthly staff meeting, I would have run. I would have run fast. Fast and far. Well, perhaps not *far* because I'm not in very good shape. And perhaps not too *fast* ... for the same reason. Come to think of it, driving probably would have been the best way to go. Or I could have called a taxi. Or taken a bus.

A few minutes later I was sitting in group prayer which precedes each staff meeting: *What are some of the things that keep us from being what God calls us to be?* we were asked.

"I'm typically willing to help someone in need," I really did say, "but my biggest problem is in giving money."

It's true. Oh, I give here and there, but nowhere near enough to alleviate my Catholic guilt for being financially stable.

Fifteen minutes later, we as a staff were introduced to the Vibrant Ministries -- Uniting Our Church Appeal. *Awesome.* Asking people to share a few dollars to help out the ministries of the local Church is a good thing. Then, as if God thought how nice it would be to inject a massive dose of irony in my life, came the manila envelopes. One for each of us.

"What's this?" we wondered.

We took the envelopes back to our offices before opening them. They contained information about the appeal. Fine. And they contained a dollar amount specific to each of us. A request. *Huh?*

"*What the...? They ... they want me to give, too?*" The amount being asked of me was outrageous! My eyes literally popped out of my head! After a trip to the optometrist, I honestly became pretty angry. *How could they put us in this uncomfortable position?* Isn't it enough that I come to work every day, and often times work?

*They don't know my struggles! They don't know how much money I've managed to scrape and save!* And ... and I don't know how lucky I have it.

I spoke with my wife. As always, she helped me to refocus. She wanted to help without having even been asked. We decided to each offer the same amount.

It was a sacrifice, and it hurt to give. What I didn't anticipate was the affect it would have on me.

Writing that check seemed to break down a wall inside of me that allowed Christ to peer out in a new way. Does that sound over dramatic? *Maybe.* But it's true. I could see with much more clarity how fortunate I was compared to a multitude of others. I saw how my giving was not much of a sacrifice at all when I compare what I have to what so many others don't have.

I could see with more crystal clarity God's place in my life. God wasn't going to let me stumble. I'd still pay my bills. I'd still go to Taco Bell.

I felt great joy! In this one act of giving, I was amazed at how much I had received.