

# THE JOY OF GIVING

## Week 1 — Trusting in God's Plan November 9-15

*In this tour, we will reflect on how to trust God as our provider, see ourselves as disciples, and find JOY IN GIVING. True happiness comes when we use God's gifts generously and share His Blessings with others.*

*Fr. William's vision for 2026 invites each of us to take part—how is God calling you to help our parish become a true reflection of His presence in our community?*

### OPENING PRAYER

**Heavenly Father,** Source of every good and perfect gift, we come before You with grateful hearts. You have given us life, faith, and the promise of eternal love through Your Son, Jesus Christ. Lord, teach us the true joy of giving— not from duty or fear, but from hearts overflowing with gratitude. May we see in every act of generosity a reflection of Your own boundless mercy.

Holy Spirit, open our eyes to the needs of others, and open our hands to share what we have received. Bless our parish family, O Lord, that through this journey we may grow in faith, hope and love. May the joy of giving draw us ever closer to You, and may our lives bear witness to Your goodness.

We ask this through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

### THIS WEEK'S SCRIPTURE READINGS

[CLICK HERE TO READ THIS WEEKEND'S READINGS](#)

- **First Reading:** Reminds us of the life-giving presence of God and of the many earthly blessings that feed and heal us.
- **Second Reading:** Reminds us that we are a temple of the Holy Spirit and encourages us to build our foundation on Christ.
- **Gospel Reading:** Shows the importance Christ placed on the Temple being a place of worship and reminds us of the attitude we should have toward it.

### Gospel Insights

In the Gospel, Jesus is upset—not with the actions of others, but with the location of their actions. He isn't angered by the buying and selling themselves, but by the fact that these activities were taking place in the Temple—a space meant for worship.

This likely happened gradually, as commerce slowly made its way into a place meant for prayer. That's often how distance in our relationship with God happens—slowly and gradually—but we are always invited to go deeper and return back to God with our whole hearts.

One of our first encounters in scripture with Jesus in the temple is after he was lost for three days. Mary and Joseph, certainly frantic, finally found their son and Lord, in the Temple. Jesus' response was astonishing. He asked His mother, "Why were you searching for me? Did you not know that I must be in my Father's house?" (Luke 2). From an early age, Jesus showed deep respect and relationship with His Father's house—a place He would visit as a child and continue into adulthood.

When you think about Jesus' righteous anger in the Temple, what does it stir in you? His actions reveal a deep love for His Father's house and a desire for worship that is pure and sincere. Are there areas in your life where worldly concerns or distractions have taken priority over your relationship with God? As you reflect on our Catholic Churches in Walnut Creek, what are your hopes for how we can grow together in faith, prayer, and love? Fr. William's vision for 2026 invites each of us to take part—how God be calling you to help our parish become a true reflection of His presence in our community?

In Jesus' time, the heart of temple worship was **sacrifice**. Today, while our sacrifices to God are no longer animals, we bring forward **bread and wine**—the work of our hands—which are transformed into His Body and Blood to nourish us. In this sacred exchange, God gives us the very gift we offer Him, returning it to us as the most precious gift of all: **Himself**. God cannot be outdone in generosity.

## QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION AND DIALOGUE

**Take some time to reflect on this week's message and discuss with your group:**

- We, like the temple, are made for worship. What are some of your favorite ways to worship God?
- Do you recognize yourself as a temple of the Holy Spirit? Why or why not?
- How does your Church community support your relationship with Christ?
- How do you, in turn, support your Church community?
- What are your hopes and dreams for the Catholic Church in Walnut Creek? Who would you like to see next to you at mass that isn't currently there?

## SCRIPTURE PASSAGES

"God loves a cheerful giver." — **2 Corinthians 9:6–7**

"But store up treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor decay destroys, nor thieves break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there also will your heart be." — **Matthew 6:20–21**

I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit I will put within you. I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. I will put my spirit within you so that you walk in my statutes, observe my ordinances, and keep them. You will live in the land I gave to your ancestors; you will be my people, and I will be your God. — **Ezekiel 36:26**

### PRAY

- Pray for your church community—that God may pour out a spirit of generosity upon all parishioners.
- Pray for those who are preparing to enter our Catholic Community through OCIA.
- Pray with the Commitment Card you have received

### ACT

- Perform one intentional act of generosity this week.
- Write a note of gratitude to someone who serves in your parish community.
- Spend a few quiet moments in prayer at church, thanking God for the blessings you've received.

### INSPIRE

- Be the first to smile. A cheerful spirit can be a small yet powerful act of generosity that lifts others' hearts.
- Share your story. Tell a friend or family member how God's generosity has impacted you.
- Invite someone to Mass. Extend a simple invitation to someone who hasn't been in a while—sometimes all it takes is a friendly nudge.

## INTERCESSIONS FOR THE GROUP

Take some time to pray together for the persons or people on the Hearts of your small group members.

## CLOSING PRAYER

**Loving God**, we thank You for gathering us together to reflect on Your Word and Your call to generosity. You have blessed us with so much—faith, family, this small group community, and the promise of eternal life. Help us to remember that you cannot be outdone in generosity. May we respond to Your goodness with open hearts and willing hands. Let every act of generosity draw us closer to You and to one another. We ask this through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**