

Time

Each and every week (until our last one), God gives us 168 hours. Hopefully, we spend it all with God, no matter what we are doing. For the most part, very little of that is restricted.

25-35% is spent sleeping. If you have a full-time job, that's another 25% - plus potential commute time. What about the rest of the time? Getting ready – for the day or for bed. Eating and prepping food and cleaning up. Time with family. Recreation and entertainment. Chores. Shopping. What amount is spent in prayer or at Mass? What amount is spent in service of your faith community and those in need? Where do these fit into your life? God gives us 8,736 hours each year. What do you do with that time? Does God really come first – not in amount, but in precedence?

Talents

We all have them. And they vary. Which makes sense. There are lots of different talents and abilities, which is good. And no one has them all. Our world needs each of them – and our Church, too. Which means the Church needs each of us. Only then can the work of Christ continue in its fullness. Lacking some people, we are lacking some gifts, and our work and mission are hurt. In truth, it's also important to acknowledge that many ministries don't require a special talent. It doesn't take a special talent to stuff a mailing. It doesn't take a special talent to put out food and drinks on Sunday after Mass or after a funeral. It just takes a willing heart and a generous spirit. It takes someone who doesn't just want to be a consumer – but to give, as well. The most important thing we always have to offer is ourselves, our lives, our time.

Render Unto Caesar...and to the Lord

This past week I had to update my tax withholdings. I have a spreadsheet system I've developed over the years and recently updated my forecast for the year. Underneath the total taxes owed line, it has a calculation of the percentage of my total income that I am rendering unto Caesar. Jesus is very clear—we must render unto Caesar that which belongs to Caesar. But He is equally clear that we must render unto God that which is God's. What percentage of our time do we give as dedicated time to the Lord? And what percentage do we spend specifically carrying out his work and ministry, and not just following our own will or our own labors?

That is what has been. How is God calling you to serve your parish and wider community in the year ahead, to maybe live differently? For disciples, it isn't a question of if, but how. Time and again Jesus calls us to be laborers in his vineyard. This week, I ask you to make a pledge of your time and talents to the Lord and one another for the year ahead using the pledge cards at Mass or online. Thank you for bringing life to our community and building up God's kingdom.

In Christ,

Fr. Matthew Oakland