

## **The Tithe**

The argument that the tithe is an Old Testament command superseded in the New Testament is convenient but wrong. Jesus said he came not to abolish the law, but to fulfil it. In Matthew 23:23 and in Luke 11:42, Jesus explicitly addresses tithing and commends it. In other passages, he raises giving to God to a whole new level. He praises Zacchaeus for promising to give at a 50 percent level (cf Luke 19:9-10).

God doesn't just want us to give a tithe. He wants us to recognise him as the owner of everything and to diligently embrace our role as stewards of what we have and hold on his behalf. And eventually, one way or another, he's taking it all back. Tithing is just the threshold – the place to get started.

Historically, the issue became confused where, in some countries, tithing was automatically included in the civic tax. People didn't have a choice; they had to pay it. As historical developments in much of Europe and North America brought the division of Church and state (and with it the end of state funding for churches), the tithe was often lost sight of, or no longer understood. In Ireland it came to be deeply resented along with the established state protestant church, which the tax funded.

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Taken from, *Rebuilt*, by Fr. Michael White and Tom Corcoran