

## First Things – part four, acts of worship

11/27/2016 Andy Figueroa

And you shall go to the priest who is in office at that time and say to him, “... *behold, now I bring the first of the fruit of the ground, which you, O LORD, have given me.*” And you shall set it down before the LORD your God and worship before the LORD your God. Deuteronomy 26:3 ... 10

First, a stewardship message: Each year at this time, we ask households to complete a card for us with their good faith estimate of next year's ordinary offerings. For most people, these are your weekly gifts that are brought to the altar. Although your card is not a pledge (no obligation) it is important. We hope you will consider returning a card an act of faithfulness. Receiving your *Estimated Tithes and Offerings* card, is the best possible source for estimating the parish's 2017 income. Therefore, if you have not yet participated in this in-gathering, won't you please prayerfully complete your card and place it in the box near the baptismal font.

Now, let's turn back to the subject of worship. In the **First Thing** we do in the Order for Holy Communion after the *liturgy of the word*, we act out Deuteronomy 26, bringing our gifts to the altar and saying, “*All things come of thee or Lord, and of thine own have we given thee.*” These are the words that David's used in his great prayer recorded in 1 Chronicles 29:14, paraphrasing what is found in Deuteronomy 26:10

How important is worship through offering? Did you know that the **first** recorded act of worship in the Bible is offering? *In the course of time Cain brought to the LORD an offering of the fruit of the ground, and Abel also brought of the firstborn of his flock and of their fat portions.* Genesis 4:3-4 That's it. A little later, *Noah built an altar to the LORD and took some of every clean animal and some of every clean bird and offered burnt offerings on the altar.* Genesis 8:20 And it was recorded that God was pleased.

What is offering? Offering is worship. The Offertory is one of the best parts of worship. In offering we get to give back a little bit of what has been given and have it taken to the altar of God. Offering is a **First Thing**. *(You) shall not appear before the LORD empty-handed. Every man shall give as he is able, according to the blessing of the LORD your God that he has given you.* Deuteronomy 16:17

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