
Tis The Season

**An article from the *Cathedral Times*
by the Very Reverend Samuel G. Candler,
Dean of the Cathedral of St. Philip**

The season has begun, but I do not know quite what to call it. In the Church, we call it Advent, said to be a holy preparation for the Incarnation of Christ. The calendar calls it that area between Thanksgiving and Christmas. Our businesses and retail outlets, many of which we ourselves operate or own, call it our season of largest revenue.

Arthur C. Brooks, in a Wall Street Journal article (titled "Charitable Explanation") of November 27, 2006, said " 'Tis the season to give." From the point of view of churches, and so many other non-profit organizations (among which we churches are formally classified-though we are so much more!), Arthur Brooks is right. We need people to give generously this time of year, and many folks do so wonderfully!

But Brooks makes another fascinating point. "While 85 million American households give away money each year to nonprofit organizations, another 30 million do not." He says there is a Giving America and Non-Giving America, and what distinguishes them is not income. In fact, he claims, "America's working poor give away at least as large a percentage of their incomes as the rich, and a lot more than the middle class." It's about values, not income. (Our ushers saw this phenomenon at our homeless requiem on November 1; one usher told me he saw more in the collection plate on that evening, from the homeless, than he sees on a typical Sunday here.)

Finally, Arthur Brooks says that the relationship between religion and charity is extraordinary; "Americans who weekly attend a house of worship are 25 percentage points more likely to give than people who go to church rarely or never. These religious folks also give nearly four times more dollars per year than secularists, on average, and volunteer more than twice as frequently."

I know from experience that Brooks' numbers are right. The Church is the one institution that actually teaches people to give; that is part of the reason we exist. Thus, I believe that our role is important for all non-profit organizations. We are the institution that actually teaches people the value of giving.

And giving happens here at the Cathedral of St. Philip. Each year, we need over \$600,000 in December revenue to meet our budget. I wonder some days if we will make it. But in each of our past several years, God has graced us with generosity. I am praying God will grace us this year as well.

Where does that grace come from? It comes from each of you reading this newsletter, whether you are a member or not. Each year, extraordinary gifts arrive from folks who are not members. Twice already in November, I have received financial gifts from members who tripled their existing pledge; one household made a double gift, giving triply to both the operating fund and the capital campaign fund! Thank you!

It is the season for giving. Please pay attention to the Cathedral's request for you to fulfill your 2006 pledge-and to make a generous pledge for 2007. We need those magnificent gifts, of all sizes. More than that, the world actually needs your gift to the Cathedral of St. Philip. The world needs our message of grace and giving and generosity. Without that message-our message, God's message-the world risks forgetting how to give at all.

Sam Candler signature



The Very Rev. Sam Candler

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