

Ever since Tuesday we've been paying more taxes. The Union Station tax has gone into effect. The proposal convinced us to raise our own taxes. Improved lighting for Kansas City passed even more easily because it comes without more taxes. We don't like being taxed; we believe in private ownership and retail. What we own is ours, and we spend on ourselves. Welfare has been hit hard by the same philosophy; namely, taxes which support the poor constitute theft from Americans who work. The Union Station tax overcame that cynicism. The community said, "Look, this benefits us all, let's all pitch in and help. And let's do it as an entire community--not just Missouri, not just Kansas, but everybody together." Kansas Citizens want the whole metro area to succeed.

That spirit of community appears in today's first reading from the Acts of the Apostles. This book picks up where the gospel of Luke left off. After the resurrection of Jesus, the Holy Spirit came at Pentecost, the apostles preached enthusiastically about Jesus, they worked miracles in his name, they endured harrassment for their beliefs, and they won converts by the thousands. The whole group was of one heart and soul, and no one claimed private ownership of any possessions, but everything they owned was held in common. Those who had property or homes sold them and gave the money to the apostles so they could distribute the proceeds to the poor. It was the honeymoon of early Christianity. There's only one improvement they'd have to make today. Instead of selling the property and giving the money to the apostles, they'd give the property to the apostles for them to sell. You know why. There's a bigger tax write-off.

Luke the first Christians shared what they owned. They also shared their time, their service, their love, and their faith. At St. Regis our community shares in a similar way. Our school is a classic example. It costs more to operate than the families of the kids can pay. So the whole parish subsidizes the school with every Sunday collection, but we also support it with our prayer, our example, and our love for those kids. That's what goes to make a community. The same is true of almost every program here--religious education, the early childhood education program, and on and on. A parish is not like a department store where you get a specific item that you pay for. A parish is like that early Christian community; people share what they have.

As April 15 draws near, we can remind ourselves that even though we complain a lot about taxes, they benefit the whole community. What makes a community great is not the extent of its private ownership, but its willingness to share.