

October 2017



A Christian Steward is:
One who receives
God's gifts gratefully,
cherishes and tends them
in a responsible and
accountable manner,
shares them in justice
and love with others,
and returns them with
increase to the Lord.

WISDOM

from ICSC strategic partners

This month's contributions come from the following ICSC Strategic Partners:



Each month ICSC sends you practical information, whitepapers, and tips, as well as other insightful information from our Strategic Partners to assist you with your responsibility as stewards of the Church.

In this edition ICSC provides for you:

- * reasons why you should start a monthly giving program offered by **DonorPerfect**
- * effective strategies to engage the Hispanic community, courtesy of **Greater Mission**
- * ways to help ensure you are included in your donors' year-end giving plans from **Guidance In Giving**
- * guidelines to crafting the perfect pastor letter shared by **Liturgical Publications**

Visit the ICSC website to view **Liturgical Publications'** video, *Stewardship - Answering the Question of "Why?"*

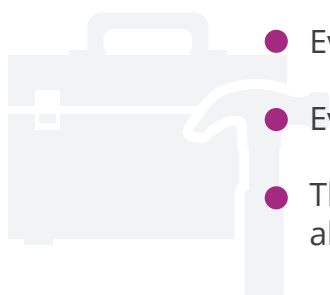
www.catholicstewardship.com/our-partners/strategic-partners/

ICSC promotes and supports Catholic teaching on stewardship by providing education and resources for dioceses, parishes, and institutions of the Roman Catholic Church. We are very grateful to our Strategic Partners for their partnership and commitment to ICSC, and their professional wisdom is a wonderful gift to ICSC members.

Maximize Donor Retention With Monthly Giving

Donor retention is critically important to lasting financial strength.

Some telling statistics from the 2017 Fundraising Effectiveness Survey Report, produced by the Association of Fundraising Professional (AFP):



- Every 100 donors gained in 2016 was offset by 99 lost donors through attrition.
- Every \$100 gained in 2016 was offset by \$95 in losses through gift attrition.
- The greatest losses in donors came from lapsed new donors in all growth-in-giving categories.



Four reasons why you should start a monthly giving program

The fundraising principle is simple: on average, recurring donors give more money for more consecutive years than single-gift donors. In addition, for many donors it is easier to donate a small amount every month rather than give a large, one-time gift. Here are four reasons why it's crucial to start a monthly giving program as soon as possible.

1. Retain more of your donors for many years.

The average donor retention rate is 43%. If you start a recurring donor program, your retention rate more than doubles!

2. Worry less about cash flow.

With the monthly revenue generated by a monthly donor program, you'll be able to focus more on your mission and prepare more reliable budgets.

3. Raise more money for your ministries!

In addition to giving for a sustained time span, monthly donors also tend to give more annually.

4. Give your donors the convenience they'll love.

Donors expect convenience when donating. Why should donating to their parish or diocese be any different than paying a gym bill? Monthly giving allows donors to contribute in the most convenient way: smaller, more frequent gifts.



To learn more about setting up a Monthly Giving program with any fundraising solution, please download the Monthly Giving Starter Kit from DonorPerfect.

800.220.8111 • donorperfect.com/monthlygiving • info@donorperfect.com

Hispanic Catholics and Gifts of Treasure

This is the second installment of a two-part article on Effective Strategies to Engage Hispanic Catholics.

(Note: Thirty-eight years ago I went to Puerto Rico to develop my Spanish when I could barely say two Spanish words together. The Puerto Rican people embraced me, encouraged me and gave me the confidence I needed. They are truly the glory of Puerto Rico. I ask you to join me in praying for the Puerto Rican people.)

Retired Cardinal Theodore McCarrick recently told me "We cannot begin to describe the Catholic Church in the United States today without recognizing its Hispanic face." Given this reality, I want to share strategies for engaging Hispanics in gifts of treasure.

As background, many Hispanics are accustomed to a Church that helps them, rather than a Church that seeks their help. Despite that, a recent Blackbaud study found that Hispanics are the ethnic group most likely to financially support their Church. Barna Research confirms that finding, indicating that 47% of Hispanics contribute to the Offertory, a rate higher than that of Anglos.

Fostering Gifts of Treasure

How can we foster gifts of treasure? These are the keys:

Educate Father: The Priest is revered in the Hispanic community. In Spanish it is said, "Father asks, and the people respond." Realize that Father's genuine concern for his people's financial status may translate into a hesitance to request gifts. This concern should not be summarily dismissed. Take great care in explaining to Father that everyone should be invited to support the Church. The decision to give is the parishioners' alone, and the parish should not deny them the opportunity for generosity. Securing Father's understanding and support is critical.

Educate Parishioners: Hispanics are more likely to give when their personal involvement is invited and respected right from the start. Use materials, videos, and oral presentations in Spanish to educate. Videos are especially helpful since they clearly show the case, detail why parishioners' help is needed and are not dependent on reading level. Emphasize that every gift is valued.

Educate Youth and Young Adults: Hispanics treasure their children. Explain to adults how their gifts can have substantial impact on ministry to youth and young adults. Also educate youth and young adults early about their role in supporting the Church. With about 800,000 Hispanic youth turning eighteen annually, they will soon be critical in supporting Church ministry. They should be encouraged to contribute to the Church as early as possible, regardless of the amount.

Focus on Faith: The Catholic Faith is the center of life for many Hispanic families. Research informs us that about 70% of Hispanics turn to God or the Saints when they confront a crisis. Every treasure effort has to be organically linked to their faith and their spiritual growth. Use Parish celebrations of their patron Saints, fiestas patronales, to show respect for Hispanic faith practices, create a joyful ambiance, and provide opportunities for parishioners of other ethnicities to join in. Generosity thrives in this environment.

Focus on Family: Hispanic culture is built on the extended family, so they understand the demands of coming together in love and sacrificing for the benefit of all. Many Hispanics have to leave their families behind and endure great hardships to ensure the welfare of their loved ones. For Hispanics their parish community is their family. When the focus is placed on the benefits from their gifts to their parish family, success is more likely.

Focus on the Future: Most Hispanics come to the United States with the dream of giving their children and families a brighter future. Church projects that reflect this goal are more likely to garner their support.

Essential Strategies

Flexible Giving: When properly presented, thoroughly explained and reinforced by a video in Spanish, Hispanics do pledge. Also provide opportunities for them to give unpledged funds through a special offertory envelope, electronically or by way of credit card. Train ushers and hospitality ministers to answer the questions of parishioners considering pledged or unpledged gifts.

Information at Mass: Mass is both a time to celebrate faith and also enjoy family and friends. Many people congregate formally or informally after Mass. For Father it is the weekly chance to educate his people about treasure efforts and request their support. Bulletin announcements supplement this information, but never can replace it.

Engage Lay Leadership: Include Hispanic leaders from the start on the team guiding the gift appeal. Their insights will be most valuable. If the parish includes Hispanics from different countries, involve representatives from those various countries.

Involve Parish Ministries: Hispanics tend to be involved in their parish's ministries. Solicitation by ministry can provide opportunities for the Pastor to meet with smaller groups and make a personal request for support. These ministry members can also be helpful ambassadors.

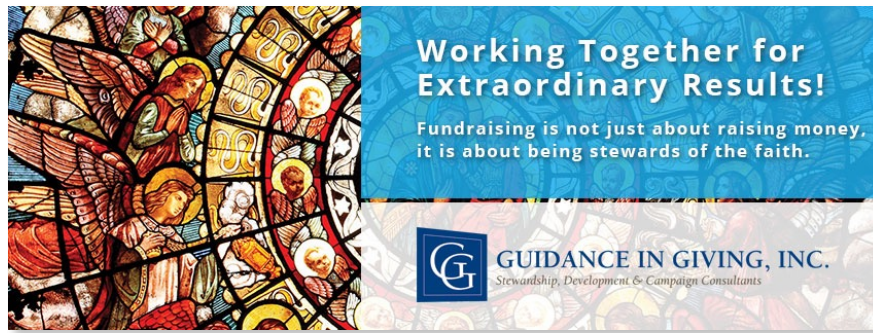
Identify Parishioners/Supporters from the Community with Resources: Not all Hispanics are poor. In fact, census data indicates that Hispanic-owned firms had annual receipts of almost \$475 billion in 2012 and were growing their annual income three times faster than the general average. Even the poorest parishes can have parishioners or outside supporters with resources. In one of our recent campaigns, a Hispanic parishioner pledged \$600,000. Identify these major donors, engage them and have Father request their support.

How important is our work with Hispanic Catholics? Think about this: in the last 55 years, on only four occasions have our Bishops assembled Catholics nationally in Encuentros to guide the Church in Hispanic ministry. The Bishops are now engaging almost a million people nationally in the Fifth National Encuentro. With almost half of all Catholics being Hispanic, and that number expected to rise continually, Hispanics are poised to take a pivotal leadership role in the Catholic Church. Together, let us get to know them, love them, and invite them to be generous givers, leaders and witnesses to the world. May God bless you and your work in His name!

- Joseph Citro, Greater Mission, Senior Vice President

The Greater Mission team of professionals is honored to serve across the country alongside the leaders of the Church and their staffs, "rethinking" along with them about bold, creative solutions that help them fulfill and fund their sacred mission. Call (800) 741-9210 to learn more.





YEAR-END GIVING

Are You Prepared?

As hard as it is to believe, Advent is almost here. Christmas and the end of 2017 are rapidly approaching, have you prepared a plan for year-end giving?

Did you know that 30% of US annual giving happens in December? December 31st is the most generous day of the year with giving concentrated between noon and 6:00pm.

While most church giving is done throughout the year, and not based solely on the end of the year push, there are many things that you can incorporate in your communication with donors. These communications can help ensure that your parish, diocese, and the charities you support are included in your donors' year end giving plan.

Stay in communication with your donors all year long

It is vital to your relationship with your parishioners that you continuously communicate what you are doing with the money they are donating. Are you providing for ministries, building new facilities, renovating, or just keeping the electricity going at your parish? Whatever the case may be, you should be sharing financial updates with your parishioners and thanking them for their generosity throughout the year.

Share, celebrate, but don't over-solicit

Inspire your parishioners to be more engaged in the work of your parish or diocese in several ways, not just financially. The more engaged they are, the more they will give of their time, talent and treasure. Share your success stories in a variety of ways, including social media such as Twitter, Facebook, website and emails, as well as from the pulpit and bulletin.

Your needs should be clearly defined

Why do you need funds? What will you be doing with the funds? Is your year-end appeal for something special, or for regular operating costs? Donors will be more engaged if you clearly define your needs.

Make your appeal personal and donor centric

At year-end, people are bombarded with emails and letters asking for money. You want my donation? Tell me why you are different. Tuesday, November 28th is Giving Tuesday, which is a social media appeal for donations to a variety of charities. Every charity will be pushing hard for donations for a variety of very worthy causes on that day. Engage your parishioners and donors regarding how they should be invested in your mission. Appeal to your donors' needs as it relates to your mission.

Technology Check

While the most effective fundraising technique is a face to face ask; realistically, this is not always possible. Donors who are 50 years and older respond more favorably to appeals through letters, bulletins and information shared at Mass. Younger generations respond more favorably to texts, Twitter, Facebook posts, emails and information on websites. Is your website mobile friendly? 66% of all emails are read on a phone or a tablet. Is your website easy to navigate? Make it easy to access on-line donations to either your offertory or campaign. Does your website provide information on how to donate stocks, property, etc? If your end of the year drive is for a specific purpose, it is imperative you have a direct link for that fund easily accessible on your website and Facebook page.

CRAFTING THE PERFECT PASTOR LETTER



Many pastors include letters in the weekly bulletin. This is a great practice but there are limits to its reach. Those who were sick, the homebound, many elderly, and those who experienced unforeseen difficulties in getting to Mass do not have a chance to read the bulletin. They might be able to stop by and pick up a copy after the fact, but most will not make the trip. The newsletter sent to each home is the best way for a pastor to communicate to his flock.

No one should ever write a pastor's letter other than a pastor. You can find from some sources templates or even completed letters where a pastor just adds his name. But a pastor's letter should always be the genuine thoughts of the writer. A congregation wants to know the real person. The congregation is owed that much.

That being said, some pastors find it easier to write regular pastor letters than others. But this process of writing a letter should never be a burden. It does not have to be long, and sometimes pastor's letters that go on for pages can turn people off. The topic, the liturgical season, and the important events in the life of a parish will dictate the length and scope of a pastor letter.



HERE ARE SOME GUIDELINES FOR WRITING A GOOD PASTOR'S LETTER:

- ▶ **Be willing** to share information about your life and experiences. The newsletter and especially the pastor's letter should be about creating relationships.
- ▶ **Be honest.** What is written in the letter has the possibility of coming back to either haunt or hinder a parish and pastor.
- ▶ **Embellishing the truth** or not telling the entire story can set up a pastor for failure. If all the truth is unable to be told, write about something else.
- ▶ **Share emotions.** A congregation loves to know what makes their leader joyful, discouraged, or angry.
- ▶ **Speak to the reality** of the lives people are living. This is your chance to show people you get it. Always try to speak to the readers' experiences. It will connect you to them and they will want to read on.
- ▶ **Always use us and we** when talking about common parish experience, spirituality, and faith practice. "We need to pray" always sounds better than "you need to pray." You are communicating that we are all in this together.
- ▶ **Think about word economy.** Say what you need and want to say and nothing more. Get to the point. This doesn't mean that stories and anecdotes aren't useful. But make sure they speak to the real topic of your letter.
- ▶ **Don't be afraid to keep it simple.**