

April 2019



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
- 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. 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.

In this edition ICSC brings you:

- * six reasons people are leaving your parish and reasons they want to stay presented by **ACS Technologies**.
- * why major gift fundraising is important and what it requires offered by **GP Catholic Services**.
- * three principles to help you implement authenticity in your parish messages provided by **J.S. Paluch Company**.
- * how to engage the generosity of your millennial parishioners from **Pushpay**.

For additional information and resources from our strategic partners visit the ICSC website at: [ICSC](http://www.catholicstewardship.com)

ICSC promotes and supports Catholic teaching on stewardship by providing education and resources for dioceses, parishes, and institutions of the Roman Catholic Church.

6 REASONS

People are Leaving

Your Parish



1 *The First Impression Was a Bust*

People know whether or not they will be a part of anything within the first 30 seconds; sometimes even before they walk through the door. These days, people are even evaluating you (online) before even seeing the door! Stay open and friendly to create a great first impression!

2 *It Was the Kids*

Your kids' program can be the straw that broke the camel's back in regards to a family's decision to stay. If the kids aren't having fun, the parents are likely to ditch. When parents see that their children are having fun learning in a safe and protected way, they'll stay invested and involved.

3 *They Never Had a Chance*

When people don't know how they can get involved, they won't. If communication isn't clear and prevalent, attendees never take the next step to stay committed. By letting people in on what's happening, you're giving them a chance to stay informed so they can stay connected.

4 *Community Didn't Stick*

When churches thrive in community one of the main contributing factors is group activities. People want to connect around common interests, experiences, and stories. Give people structures to create community around more than Mass that they won't want to miss.

5 *They Were Never Fully Vested*

When people are a part of something much bigger than themselves, it gives them a sense of purpose and fulfillment. But, if they aren't giving to the cause, it's easier to disconnect from it. Help them stay invested by showing them how their giving affects the lives of your people.

6 *You Make Them Uncomfortable*

When things are new, they can become awkward. By explaining what you're doing and why, it helps new people get accustomed to the praxis instead of uncomfortable by the practice. Create awareness of what you're doing and why it matters so people can get great value from it.

Discover more growth, giving, systems, and real ministry resources at:

ministry.acst.com

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MAJOR GIFT FUNDRAISING:

why it's important and what it requires

Building a highly successful major gifts program requires an investment of time, effort, and money, but experience shows that the return is well worth it: not simply because of the dollars raised but also because of the high level of engagement that major donors have in the mission and ministries of the Church.

Successful development programs in all types of non-profit organizations, including dioceses, parishes, and schools, rely on complementary fundraising efforts. Some of these efforts, such as capital campaigns, are undertaken intermittently. Others, such as the annual appeal, are conducted on a regular and recurring basis.

Another regular effort undertaken to provide the financial support and funding stability non-profit organizations need is a "Major Gifts Program." Major gifts provide much-needed financial resources in the most efficient and cost-effective way. Major gifts are defined differently for every organization but generally refer to contributions that are significant in value for the organization.

Illustrated simply, to raise \$1 million from small gifts requires many hours of hard work and expense. The same amount raised through major gifts can be accomplished with a much smaller number of targeted asks to prospective donors (properly qualified and cultivated) at a much lower cost-per-dollar raised. Of course, giving to the Church and her ministries is about more than money, and all are called to support the ministries that touch the lives of so many people.

Major gift fundraising requires a systematic approach and the discipline to carry out five critical activities:

1. Prospect Identification and Qualification: Find people who share the Church's values and who have the capacity and potential desire to give at high levels.

2. Case Development: Tell your story in nuanced but compelling ways that illustrate the impact large gifts can have on the lives of individuals, families, and communities.

3. Cultivation: Take the time to inform, involve, and inspire current and prospective donors so that they truly want to participate in ways that are transformational for them as individuals and for the Church.

4. Solicitation: Ask for significant gifts that are tailored to the specific needs and interests of the person(s) being invited—in a very personal way—to engage in the Church's mission.

5. Infrastructure: Build a robust and sustainable major gifts program through appropriate staffing and ongoing training and investment in the people, programs and systems needed to support the activities outlined above.

To build a strong major gifts program where one does not exist or only exists minimally requires a team effort. In a Catholic diocese, the members of that team would likely include the bishop, vicar general/chancellor, volunteers (clergy and lay), and the development staff. Parishes and schools should also develop major gift programs to support ongoing and special needs.

Professional counsel can be retained to provide expertise and experience that the parish, school or diocese may not currently possess but will quickly gain over the course of a multi-month engagement designed to develop, launch and sustain an efficient, cost-effective Major Gifts Program.



Senior Vice President Dan Conway is a globally recognized author, speaker, and leader in the field of mission advancement who has helped redefine the meaning of stewardship in the Catholic Church.

The Power of Authenticity: Let your voice shine

by Ryan Kreager

I have two priests at my parish: Msgr. Bill and Fr. Eric. Msgr. Bill is the first to tell you that he has a short fuse when he's stressed out. He's lost his cool and yelled at staff (and then later profusely apologized). Fr. Eric's vice is sweets, especially doughnuts. He will be the first to tell you it has contributed negatively to his health. How do I know these things? Because they candidly and openly discuss their faults in their homilies. They aren't afraid to be authentic with our community; and their candid, un-photoshopped view into their lives has built an immense trust between them and our parish.



We are entering a season of authenticity as a culture. As we pass through Peak Social Media, we've grown jaded by the veneer that internet platforms provide and the way that such veneers keep people at arm's length. Over the next five years, we will see a greater emphasis on authenticity, direct language, real stories, and unvarnished truth. Kris Valloton, Senior Associate Leader and pastor of Bethel Church, puts this hunger succinctly: "Give me the real. Even if I disagree with a person, at least I know what he's thinking."

If you want to build trust between your parish staff and your parishioners, as well as build a culture of trust among your flock, you have to start with authenticity. How can we implement authenticity in our messages? There are three simple principles to keep in mind:

1. You can't 'fake' authenticity – you have to live it. Authenticity is not a game to win or a skill to learn, it is a virtue to be cultivated. When you are honest in your speech and direct in your actions, that authenticity will shine through to the people under your ministry. Actively fight tendencies in yourself and your parish team to equivocate, avoid difficult topics, gossip, or lie. Pray and cultivate the virtue of honesty, and authenticity will follow.
2. Before opening any social media, remember: It's Not Real. Social media is the psychological equivalent of a live rattlesnake. If you don't treat it with respect, it absolutely will bite and poison you.
3. Don't be afraid to give a warts-and-all message when needed. Did something go wrong while planning an event, and now it isn't going to happen? It's ok to let people know you are human. When you are authentic, people will trust you more, and that trust can have beautiful and surprising effects.

Begin with honest authenticity and let the Holy Spirit do the rest.

Engaging The Generosity of Your Millennial Parishioners

Millennials Looking for Communion.

The statistics on Millennials and faith don't paint a pretty picture. Pew Research Center found that only 44 percent of older Millennials say "religion is very important in their lives"—a number that drops to 38 percent when looking at younger Millennials. One common explanation for this trend is the not-so-fun fact that millennials feel a strong disassociation from community.

According to Rev. Scott Bailey, the 30-year-old priest secretary to the archbishop for the Archdiocese of Denver: "In a certain sense, we're more connected because of social media, but a lot of times we lack intimate relationships with other people. If there's something that might draw people into church, it might be that there's something they're not getting from social media."

Father Bailey has identified a deep truth: The Catholic Church, particularly on the parish level, has so much to offer Millennials. For those who have uprooted many times since beginning college or careers and who have likely moved far away from family and friendships, the Body of Christ offers the opportunity for communion.

Particularly for the infamous "single, career-minded, younger adult," the Church brings the promise of her head, Jesus, "and behold, I am with you always, until the end of the age" (Mt. 28:20). This love is first found in union with Christ, but the Church, as the hands and feet of Christ in the world, is where that love is found, in her offering of the Eucharistic banquet.

Millennials and Generosity

What does the Eucharist have to do with Millennials and giving? Everything.

Teaching stewardship—particularly financial stewardship—as they become more and more financially stable, encourages Millennials to cultivate and nurture the community and spiritual life of their parish. It invites them to participate in the Church's mission, to find community, joy, and to respond with authentic gratitude.

But before a church can start teaching its younger parishioners to give, it's important to make it clear where those opportunities exist for them to be generous. So when they feel that conviction to be charitable, they can immediately respond by giving. This is where digital technology comes into play. Millennials are on their mobile devices for an average of five hours a day, so your parish needs to clearly lay out giving opportunities through channels like the parish's website, mobile app, and on social media.

When the needs of the parish your millennials have come to know and love are clearly outlined, not only are they more likely to participate in those ministries, but they're also more likely to support the needs of your parish because it truly feels like their home community.



To discover the practical steps your parish can take to cultivate deeper engagement and generosity among your millennials, download the free ebook, **Catholic Guide To Digital Giving**, written by Marina Olsen with Pushpay.

Pushpay.com