

June 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:



Office of
National Collections
One Church. One Mission.

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:

- * four ways to reinvigorate your annual appeal plan compliments of **GP Catholic Services**.
- * the benefits of endowments in fortifying our future provided by **Lynch Development Associates**.
- * four strategies for nurturing a sense of belonging among parishioners courtesy of **Pushpay**.
- * generosity beyond parish walls from the **Office of National Collections, United States Conference of Catholic Bishops**.

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

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

Four ways to reinvigorate your annual appeal plan

Is your Annual Appeal stagnant or showing signs of decline? It's a trend across a number of philanthropic sectors. Is this a case of people no longer being interested in supporting important operations, or have messages around these efforts simply become white noise?

GP Catholic Services has tracked this trend and sees a great opportunity for Annual Appeals across the country: to step forward with a clear message that demonstrates both need and impact, in order to then encourage members of the faith to step forward in continuing the work and service of the Church.

In many cases, annual solicitations roll out in the same way each year. While a new theme may emerge, the communication, solicitation method, and process remain the same. However, doing the same thing over and over while expecting different results can only lead to disappointment and frustration.

Reestablishing Annual Appeals as a basis of operational funding requires change. GP Catholic Services sees a number of important steps any development office should take to make a positive impact.

1. Create a year-round communications plan.

While solicitation and gifts occur during a narrow window each year, the funds raised are used year-round to make a difference throughout a diocese.

It's important that the story of the difference those gifts make is shared often through a coordinated message in diocesan publications, on the website, in direct mail, and through personal visits. Since more people get news and information and make financial decisions today on their phone or computer, the medium of the message must adapt to this new reality. Ask yourself:

- ✚ Is the information being shared in a way that is understood and accessible by most parishioners?
- ✚ Does it assume a detailed knowledge of diocesan services?
- ✚ Does the information share something measurable, such as the monthly costs to support a retired priest or educate a seminarian?

2. Be clear and measurable in seeking support.

Annual Appeals often touch upon a wide range of diocesan programs and ministries. Those who read the appeal information can be left with questions, including how the need was determined, how many people will be assisted, and where lives are being touched. Ask yourself:

- ✚ Are prospects being told how gifts can make a difference?
- ✚ Is it evident what a gift of \$100, \$1,000, or \$10,000 can do in various areas?

3. Note how people are being asked to give.

This goes beyond whether people are being asked to complete a pledge card and return a check or go online to make their gift.

Active appeals can also encourage prospects to consider making multiple payments to help beyond the single transaction. Ongoing personal visits and solicitation with key donors can and should go beyond a message of, "please do what you did before". Ask yourself:

- ✚ Are past donors being segmented and screened?
- ✚ Are the top prospects being visited and solicited in person?
- ✚ How are past donors being asked to increase support?
- ✚ What steps are being taken to engage lapsed donors?
- ✚ Can donors "wait the campaign out?" For example, when the campaign reaches its goal, does everything stop? Or, does the campaign continue to seek participation?

4. Finally, say "thank you."

The first two words toward the next gift is "thank you". Ask yourself:

- ✚ Are your communications personal or does some form of general announcement of thanks try to cover the obligation?
- ✚ How does the thank you build the relationship, reinforce understanding of the impact, and invite continued involvement?

Many consider these challenging times in the Catholic Church. Perhaps. But ongoing communications, transparency, and impact invite people to see the vast amounts of good being done.

If you would like to talk about your campaign, examine results, and look at robust options to strengthen the Annual Appeal message, please contact us.

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GP Catholic Services, a division of Graham-Pelton, is a leading fundraising consulting firm serving the Catholic Church. Specializing in designing and managing fundraising campaigns for dioceses, schools, parishes, and religious orders, we offer decades of fundraising and development experience with a powerful focus on the Catholic Church.

FORTIFYING OUR FUTURE

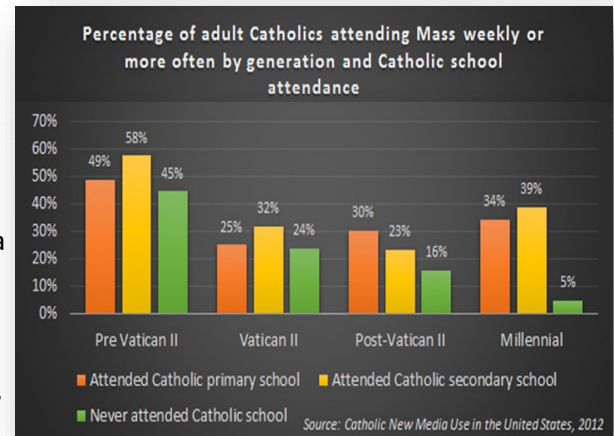
The Benefit of Endowments

Today, it is commonplace to hear of another Catholic elementary school closing its doors or merging with another while the local Catholic high school struggles with enrollment to keep its doors open. This story has become so commonplace that we, as Catholics, simply accept the decline of Catholic education, the reality that families just cannot afford it and that sooner or later most, if not all, of our Catholic schools... will close. The rising cost of living, our societal desire to save for our children's costly college education and our need to save for retirement have superseded the desire to provide a foundational, faith-based education for our children.

Why are we as Catholics not more panicked? May it be that we do not fully understand the tremendous impact on our Church and our society that the closing of Catholic schools will have?? The impact based on recent research suggests that school closings will significantly affect present and future Mass attendance. Studies show that present and future Mass attendance by adults of the Post Vatican II generation and Millennial generation has declined significantly especially in relationship to whether or not these persons attended Catholic school. Today, only 5% of the millennial generation who did not attend Catholic elementary school or high school attend Mass as adults. *Yet, 34% who attended Catholic elementary school and 39% who attended Catholic high school do attend.*

We, as a Catholic family of faith, must also realize that if we do not make a significant effort to save our Catholic schools, the very future of our Catholic parishes will be next!

It is critical for dioceses, parishes, elementary and high schools, to create endowments to fund financial assistance programs for their institutions.



On the parish level, endowments can be initiated by including their funding in parish-based capital campaigns which highlight the long-term mission of the school and its relationship to the entire Catholic faith community.

For our high schools, we all see that it is important to have capital campaigns to build new STEM buildings and wings and provide excellent theater and sports facilities, yet it is critically important that endowments be added as a significant portion of your case.

Although this may be a new concept for parishioners and alumni, faithful Catholics are very interested and generous when developing endowments for enrollment support and the long-term viability of our Catholic schools. There is little time to waste, and the time to act is right now.



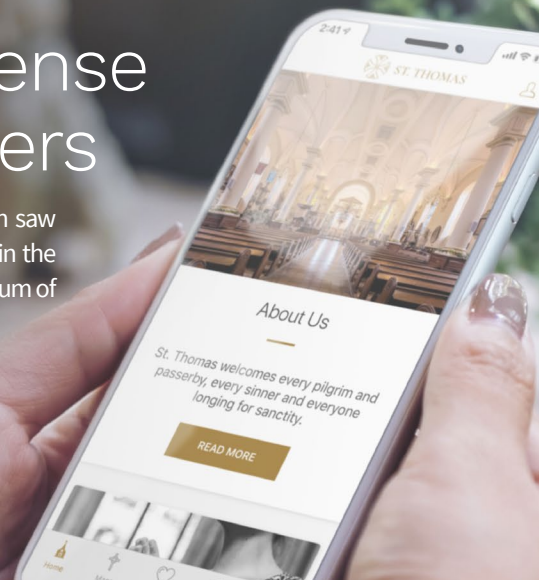
L·D·A
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Contact us for a free consultation to explore your capital potential:
631-351-1368 info@lynchdevelopment.com | www.lynchdevelopment.com



4 Strategies For Nurturing A Sense of Belonging Among Parishioners

The more your church grows, the tougher it becomes to engage with the whole parish. Fr. Mallon saw this tendency clearly in the case of a man who claimed he just wasn't religious enough to engage in the parish. Reflecting on that event, Fr. Mallon explained that this fellow "would carry out the bare minimum of his religious duty, and I would leave him alone and not expect anything else. He was content in this because, for the most part, ordinary Catholics were just 'not that religious.' People who were 'that religious' were those who became priests or nuns...[he met many who seemed to believe that,] for the average Catholic, holiness and mission is not their job. It is the priest or nun who can be holy and can evangelize. Ordinary Catholics just do not do these things; they are fundamentally unable to do these things."



Fr. Mallon admits this young man isn't an outlier. So how can your leaders encourage a deeper sense of community among parishioners?

- 1. Offer ministry introductions.** In Rev. Kenneth S. VanHaverbeke's book, *Stewardship MD: Stewardship Fatigue Virus Syndrome*, the Diocese of Wichita suggests that when parishioners don't seem to know what a parish has to offer, "It is not unusual for parishioners to become isolated and identify only the ministries affecting them. Ministry introductions are a great way to break isolation...Prior to the beginning of Mass, a parishioner will give a 2-3 minute talk introducing a particular ministry within the parish. The talk would include who, what, and why the ministry exists. After mass, the ministry would have a table or booth outside so parishioners can sign up or ask questions." Doing this regularly enables each ministry to be emphasized individually and in a context of prayer and helps parishioners see if this ministry might be one God is calling them to join.
- 2. Host a ministry fair or connections event.** Ministry fairs and small group connection events allow you to connect a large number of people at one time. You simply invite people to an event where they can sift themselves into interest, calling, life stage, or geographic groups. These events are also designed to identify new leaders, which can be particularly helpful when starting new groups.
- 3. Disciple new leaders.** As Catholics mature in their faith, the parish needs to encourage them to take on the leadership roles of adults within the parish community. One way parishes can do this is by developing apprentice leaders in each existing small group or ministry team. But don't stop there. Raise the visibility of those leading ministries, small groups, and faith formation classes to encourage more people to step up. Also, consider offering leadership and ministry training opportunities.
- 4. Offer stewardship opportunities within groups.** Encourage group leaders to give everyone a job. When you give people jobs, they have a reason to return and they learn they aren't a part of the group just to passively consume—they are in the group to contribute! Those jobs can include everything from organizing snacks to helping with the weekly emails. Give people a job in a small group, and they'll look for ways to participate in the broader parish mission.



GENEROSITY BEYOND PARISH WALLS

“I am a mission on this earth; that is the reason why I am here in this world. We have to regard ourselves as sealed, even branded, by this mission of bringing light, blessing, enlivening, raising up, healing and freeing.”
[1]

- Pope Francis, *Evangelii Gaudium* (Joy of the Gospel)

In the apostolic exhortation, *Evangelii Gaudium*, Pope Francis writes of his dream of a missionary impulse in the Church which would “transform everything.”[1] It would transform the Church from within and through its witness and proclamation be a transforming agent of human life and action. Pope Francis has emphasized that the reception of Vatican II has scarcely begun, and he has dedicated his own apostolate to seeing to its fuller implementation. Forces were set in motion by the work of the Council and they have yet to mature.

To be a disciple of Christ is to be a missionary disciple. As Pope Francis continues to remind us in *Evangelii Gaudium*, baptism makes us ‘missionary disciples’ within the communion of the Church, each one of us becomes a missionary disciple.[2] As missionary disciples, we are called to be active in fulfilling the primary mission of the Church, to make disciples of all nations by sharing the Good News of the Gospel. In order to give witness to the presence of God in the world, we need the support of a community—the Church. Through the Church, the presence of God in our life can become a transforming witness throughout the world. It’s not enough to have a parish stewardship committee concerned about the parish and local community, the whole parish is called to look beyond its walls, participating in Christ’s mission and bearing witness to the difference Christ makes in our lives. A committee can provide education for the parish about its stewardship efforts and stimulate thinking about how it can reach out beyond the church doors, to give witness to the Gospel in the neighborhoods beyond where parishioners live: their various places of work, schools, shopping centers, recreation areas, and in all relationships.

[1] Ibid, par. 27

[2] Ibid, par. 120

A constant thread throughout Scripture is the call to right relationship with God, as well as with our sisters and brothers. The Church and her teachings help us discern our response to this call, to take up our responsibility in seeking the Spirit and responding as disciples encountering the world.

The mission and work of the USCCB’s national collections lie at the intersection of tradition and our response to the call to be missionary disciples of Christ, especially relating to those living in poverty and with limited resources. The programs and projects funded through the national collections are attentive to both people’s overlooked challenges and their unrecognized gifts. Throughout Church history we see this deep expression of communion with suffering people – an awareness that we are co-travelers in the world with them. This is our call, which is a very powerful call of the Lord to the whole community. It’s good to keep in mind the words of Pope Francis who said:

“Jesus does not want to work alone; he has come to bring God’s love into the world and wants to spread it in communion, in fraternity. Because of this he immediately forms a community of disciples, which is a missionary community. Immediately he teaches them to be missionaries, to go out.”

- Pope Francis, *Angelus* (Vatican City, July 08, 2013)

It takes a people converted to the Lord to be disciples who willingly share in His mission. The Holy Spirit has been given to us, let us respond generously to His grace at work within us.

Submitted by the USSCB - Office of National Collections
and the USCCB- Office of Evangelization and Catechesis