

October 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:

- * a steady path to an increased offertory compliments of **GP Catholic Services**.
- * strategies for year-end giving courtesy of **Greater Mission**.
- * what questions to ask when you are considering a fundraising endeavor provided by **Lynch Development Associates**.
- * eight ways parishes are using custom apps to evangelize within their communities from **Pushpay**.

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

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

A Steady Path to an Increased Offertory

When there is talk about launching an increased offertory effort, who leads the discussion? The source can greatly influence the case, implementation, and results.

Frequently, the Finance Council leads this discussion. Here's a possible scenario:

After working with the business manager and pastor to review upcoming expenses and income, there is a shortfall to a balanced budget. The Finance Council has helped control all the expenses possible, but even still, financial demands are higher than anticipated offertory.

To secure additional revenue, the idea of an increased offertory program is suggested. The narrative that is then articulated focuses on what it would take to get the parish to a balanced budget. Language that is used might involve messages such as, "If you give three dollars per week, could you do five dollars?" Or, "If you give twenty dollars a week, can you give twenty-five?"

Once the budget shortfall is covered, victory is declared and the effort closes down until the next budget shortfall. The entire engagement through this effort is a financial transaction attached to the donor's wallet. It assumes that when the parish gets back to net-zero dollars, then every need that the parish desires to respond to will then be met.

In a growing number of instances, it is a Stewardship Committee that establishes a path to fully engage every parishioner to be of their best service to the mission of the Church. This process of prayer, almsgiving, and service invites people to participate in all aspects of Church life. This path asks everyone to look at their personal balance sheet -- and not just their bank account balance, but rather the skills they have and the time they can make available to serve the ministries of the Church.

No longer is the message about a balanced budget. It's about what we can do to serve the many missions of the Church -- together.

Increased offertory programs as part of a stewardship approach take longer to plan, but the good news is that, in turn, the corresponding results last longer.

This approach requires four elements:

1. The parish to assess its needs and opportunities for involvement. How can people be invited to use their time and talent, in addition to treasure?
2. Screening to assess financial opportunities for involvement.
3. A Stewardship Committee that must be deliberately curated and extensively trained.
4. A commitment to making this approach part of the operating culture of the parish.

An approach focused on a full and comprehensive stewardship effort yields dramatic results. These include significant increases in Mass attendance, additional volunteers across all ministries, and jumps in financial support.

On average, contributions at parishes that fully practice stewardship are 19% higher than at parishes that don't. In addition to becoming a stakeholder in the delivery of your mission, a stewardship-focused approach means that your donors will carefully consider their offertory in a light that allows them to participate in a planned and measured way.

In many instances, when people make an annual decision about how much they will give (as, for example, a percentage of income or annual dollar amount), contributions increase two-fold or more versus when a decision is made as the offertory basket passes by each week.

Fully implementing a stewardship effort isn't always easy or quickly done. It must become a culture within the Church. And it requires a willingness to commit to welcoming input and involvement at all levels of the Church.

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.



Greater Mission

*Inspiring Faithful Charity;
Fulfilling Church Potential*

YEAR END STRATEGIES

The end of the year is around the corner — one of the biggest fundraising opportunity of the year! One goal you should have is to create a year-end campaign that will effectively reach the hearts and minds of your donors and potential donors and inspire them to support your parish or school.

From November to New Year's Eve, American generosity skyrockets, causing people to be more generous and volunteer for causes they care most about. Thanking donors is perhaps the most important part of your campaign. Spread the spirit of gratitude across your network of supporters by intentionally thanking donors of all ages. There is a direct correlation between thanking donors and receiving future donations.

Donors get involved with nonprofits over the holidays for four primary reasons:

1. To be happier by helping others
2. To make a difference
3. To be connected to something positive
4. To take advantage of tax deductions

There are three steps to a year-end giving program:

1. Plan your strategy
2. Implement best practices, and
3. Coordinate your year-end appeal across all possible channels.

During the planning phase, parish schools or agencies should segment their donors based on their communication preferences and how they prefer to give.

One of the most effective ways to break out of the noise is creating segmentation in your communications. Different age groups respond differently to messages and use different platforms. Make sure you implement all available avenues including social media, websites, online giving, email, and direct mail.

The important thing to remember before moving forward with your end-of-year giving strategies is that not everyone should be receiving the same message. Your organization should be delivering the appropriate year-end appeal that resonates with the donor on a personal level.

Showcase the impact of your mission to donors for future calls-to-action. Always follow the 3-to-1 rule which is to share 3 pieces of compelling content before asking for a donation. (when – all at the end of the year?)

Also note, 57% of online donors make a gift after watching a video, making it the most effective form of media. Smartphones make it easy to create compelling videos and photos that:

- Showcase the good you are doing
- Share stories of individuals that have been touched by your mission
- Highlight the transformative impact of giving
- Compel the recipients to take action
- Follow through on the plan and monitor results a couple of times a week so adjustments can be made, especially with social media campaigns. Changes to strategies, new updates, videos, or calls-to-action through social media are the quickest and most cost-effective adjustments to make.

**Ask
Once...**

**Ask
Well!**

The Benefit of Hiring Counsel

When any institution begins to consider a major fundraising endeavor, it is common for the leadership to contemplate conducting the appeal "in-house." While the administration and leadership are well intentioned, their tendency is to underestimate the work involved with conducting such a campaign. All too often our clients, especially those who considered an "in-house" campaign effort, will share how grateful they are that they were not alone on this journey.

As you consider your fundraising endeavor, ask yourself the following questions:

	In-House Staff	Professional Counsel
Who on my staff can conduct confidential interviews about the case and leadership of this organization?	?	✓
Will they know what questions to ask and how?	?	✓
Who on my staff has development experience?	?	✓
Have they ever run a major capital effort?	?	✓
Are they able to realistically determine our capacity?	?	✓
Can they dedicate an additional 40+ hours of their workweek for the next three to six months?	?	✓
Who on my staff is able to streamline and maximize our major gift effort?	?	✓
Can they recruit, train and motivate volunteers to reach out to their peers?	?	✓
Do they have graphic design and communication skills including social media and website experience?	?	✓
Who on my staff is able to keep me and others on task and on track with the campaign timeline?	?	✓

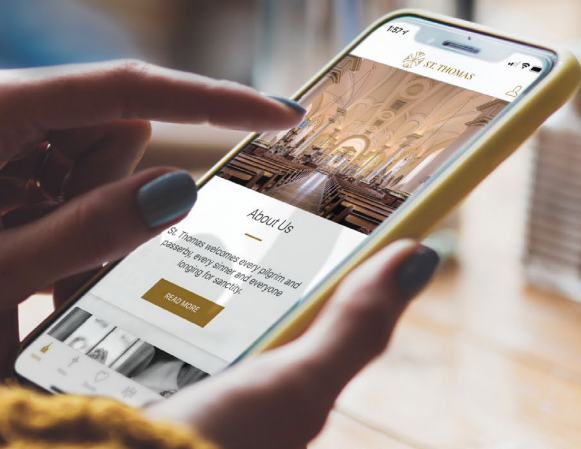
Odds are that even if you have an in-house development team, it would not be feasible for them to take on such a sizable commitment in addition to their regular duties.

Professional counsel comes equipped with years of experience behind them to address every need of your feasibility study, capital campaign and more. In order for your effort to be successful, you should strive to **"Ask Once and Ask Well!"** Professional counsel will provide a strong first and lasting impression to your supporters that you are ready to deliver the plans which are presented and that their investment in the future will be successful.

When considering professional counsel, ask your colleagues who they partnered with, if they would do so again and if, after going through the experience, would they have been able to conduct the campaign on their own. Professional counsel will raise more money and keep things on track. For your success and the health of your community, hiring professional counsel is well-worth the investment!

Discover Mobile-Enabled Evangelism for Catholic Churches

Evangelism is a cornerstone of the Church, and we're increasingly seeing technology impact the way it's done. That doesn't mean the message changes. In fact, it never will. However, we're seeing Parishes get more creative in the ways they disseminate their messages and convert nonbelievers into committed members of faith. Before you reject the idea of using technology as an evangelization tool, let's consider the fact that nearly five billion people worldwide have smartphones. This creates a wonderful opportunity for sharing the message of Christ through digital mediums.



8 Ways Parishes Are Using Custom Apps to Evangelize Within Their Communities:

1. **Bulletins:** An app is an easily accessible place for people to read and review the bulletin. Our Holy Father has asked us to limit our carbon footprint in his writings of *Laudato Si'*. With access to the bulletin digitally, you can reduce your use of paper and save money on printing costs.
2. **Calendar:** Having the calendar always available and in the palm of your parishioners allow them to more easily plan on attending parish events and Holy Days.
3. **Messaging:** Apps are awesome for sharing daily devotional messages, reminders, announcements, the Daily Readings and the prayers of the faithful.
4. **Homily:** Apps also make it easy to link audio or video messages of the homily to be shared on the app every week.
5. **Prayer:** You can use your app to guide people through contemporary and traditional prayer practices like the Liturgy of the Hours within the Holy Catholic faith. This is a great way to help parishioners develop their prayer life, and they will have it in their pocket everywhere they go.
6. **Confession:** You can set a tab on your app to include an Examination of Conscience in preparation to confession, review the schedule of available times for confession, and even have a copy of the Act of Contrition available in the palm of your hands if you don't know it by heart.
7. **Offerings:** Eliminating the need to remember to write a check and put it in an envelope is a great option for many GenX and Millennial members. Being able to do an autopay or in-pew offering from the phone is so much easier and in alignment with *Laudato Si'*.
8. **Rosary:** One of the most valuable elements of a Catholic App is a tab for saying the rosary. So many say they don't have the time to say it. Folding it into an app that sets a timeframe for completion that is audio-driven enables people to incorporate it into their busy day.

Discover what it means to cultivate a meaningful digital presence at your church and use technology to enable more evangelism within your community.

Download the free ebook, [**The Digital Trinity: Fueling Participation and Generosity Through Web, Social, and Mobile**](#), today.



[Pushpay.com](https://pushpay.com)