

November 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:



DIOCESAN



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.

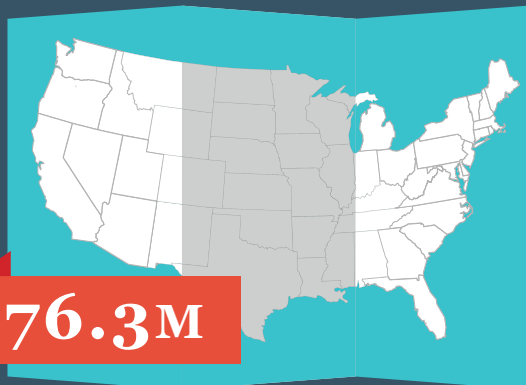
In this edition ICSC brings you:

- * a snapshot of the Catholic population regarding giving compliments of **CCS**.
- * simple tips to effectively communicate using print during the upcoming season courtesy of **Diocesan**.
- * ways to inspire gifts of time provided by **J.S. Paluch Company**.
- * the value of data in pastoral planning provided by **LPi**.
- * the reasons mindset matters from **OSV**.

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.

A Snapshot of the Catholic Population¹



Self-Identified Catholics in the U.S., a 2.6% increase



States that showed parish growth were in the South and the West, along with some in the Midwest. **Texas** showed the most growth with 293 new parishes, followed by **Florida** with 165.

Religious Giving is Still the Largest Philanthropic Sector by a Wide Margin

\$124.52 billion

Religious giving received the largest share of dollars in the U.S. – **29%**, over twice the size of the next largest sector.

68.7M

Catholics belong to 17,007 parishes, a <0.1% increase



12.7M

Foreign-born Catholics, a 24.8% decrease

The Net Change in the Number of Parishes

1971 to 2018³

1,239

new parishes

2,656

closed parishes

1,417

net loss of parishes

Catholic Giving Continues to Make a Significant Impact²



1.86 million students were educated in 6,309 Catholic schools

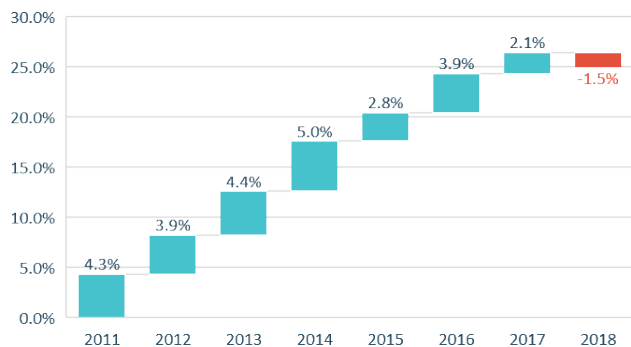


99.9 million patients were cared for in 552 Catholic hospitals

25% of Catholics surveyed said they give \$50 or more every week to their parish.⁶

7 Years of Growth in Religious Giving

After seven years of growth, giving to religion declined **1.5%**.



Online Giving is on the Rise

Giving online to religion **increased 2.9%** in 2018, more than twice that of average overall growth.⁴

Religious giving made up **9.6%** of online giving, and **6%** of donations to #GivingTuesday.

The average religious gift size was **\$195 online**.

1 Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate, 2019
2 Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate, 2019
3 Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate, 2019

4 Blackbaud, 2019
5 Giving USA, 2019
6 America: The Jesuit Review, 2018

Is Print Obsolete?

Remember back when Barnes and Noble and newspapers were supposed to go out of business because the internet was going to take over the world? Well, here we are in 2019, and books, magazines, bulletins, and printed materials are still just as effective as ever. With the invent of technology, it is easy to see the print world as an outdated form of communication, but the Gospel is too important to neglect any communication channel. Here are three simple tips to effectively communicate using print.

1

PROMOTE USING BANNERS

Banners are a great way to promote a liturgical season, event, or Feast Day. We have no shortage of celebrations in the Catholic church, so why not display them beautifully with a banner at the entrance of the church? These not only make the space more welcoming, but they help newcomers to your parish community know that there is always something going on.

2

POSTCARD CAMPAIGN

With Christmas fast approaching, it is the perfect time to reach out to the people in your community who may not attend Mass on a regular basis. An easy way to invite them into the parish life is by making a postcard inviting them to Christmas Mass. The post office has a service called every door direct where you can bring these postcards, and they will make sure that every person within your geographical area receives them. Don't mess with the hassle of a bulk mailing or mail merge. Simply let the Post Office deliver the Good News to every person in your area.

3

BOOKMARK GIVEAWAY

Many parishes will give a free book to parishioners during the Christmas season. Take this a step further and include a beautiful bookmark with an image of a saint or something seasonal. Make sure to include the welcome page of your website so that new parishioners can learn more about your community.

The upcoming season is the perfect time to gain new parishioners. Don't forget the importance of print in reaching the unchurched. From all of us here at Diocesan, God Bless!

Parties. Prayer. Process. — How to Inspire Gifts of Time

Jacqueline Thomas

Life is busy. We all have personal commitments, working, serving, volunteering. Sometimes it feels like there just isn't enough time to do all we need — and want — to do. Understanding that time is a gift and a resource can help put priorities into perspective. The time we are given on this Earth is a gift from God, and we are given free will to decide how to use it. How can we harness good intentions to serve in ourselves and in our parish?

I was recently talking to a colleague about the idea that choosing to spend time in an activity or with people is a gift and a conscious choice. Time is a limited resource. We all know that the more time that is spent actively engaged in parish life has far-reaching benefits, not just for the parishioner but for the parish community as a whole. This colleague told me a great story of a local priest near South Bend, Indiana who found a way to inspire gifts of Time in the parish he led.



This pastor noticed that his parish community was not as robust and cohesive as it could be. He and the parish council made an ambitious 3-year plan to transform the parish into a community that was generous with their time, talent, and treasure.

Parties.

The first year was spent getting to know each other. The goal was to be the parish that “partied together,” as they called it. Weekly events brought the community together. Parishioners spent a year giving of their time planning these events, enjoying these gatherings, and getting to know each other better.

Prayer.

Year 2 was spent praying together. Now that parishioners had

taken the time to get to know each other better, they were in a spot where they could come together and pray more cohesively and powerfully. This parish spent a whole year focusing on praying together as one unified community and the results were visible. Parish engagement was up, and parishioners started giving more of their time to parish life.

Process.

The third-year was focused on giving of Time, Talent, and Treasure. The parishioners knew each other, had formed one collective heart for the parish, and had created a strong, robust community of disciples. The pastor and the parish council really understood that the process of transforming the parish relied on changing both hearts and habits. The pastor himself committed his time to the process, and in turn, his flock did too.

I love this story for many reasons. The parish leadership had a goal. They had a strategy for reaching that goal and communicated the plan in a consistent voice. They realized that the gift of Time was as essential to the spiritual health of the parish as Talent and Treasure, yet realized that commitment to one element of strong stewardship would foster growth in all three.

Through the process, parishioners not only increased their generosity but better learned how to communicate with each other. In our busy daily lives, when the giving of time takes intentionality and commitment, communicating clearly and efficiently is essential. What communication tools does your parish use to accomplish your stewardship goals? Do you use a messaging App? Parish Relationship Management software? A website that leads with beauty? Daily faith enhancing tools optimized for smartphones? There are wonderful tools available for Catholic parishes to improve communication and accomplish the goals that the community sets forth. Once communication is in place, the gift of Time becomes much more robust, and your parish can become one that parties, prays, thrives, and lives out its mission more faithfully and more authentically, all for the glory of God.



THE VALUE OF DATA IN PASTORAL PLANNING

By Tracy Earl Welliver, Director, Parish Community & Engagement

Parishes need to take more seriously the value of their parishioner database. As Church, we have done a poor job of calling people to accountability or reaching out to those who drift away. Not only does an inaccurate database provide little data to build upon, it also represents lost opportunities for evangelization and community building. Following are some great data points to follow for trends.

MASS ATTENDANCE

When working with a parish, I am no longer surprised that they only count the people who attend the weekend Masses once a year. They only do that because of a diocesan mandate! What do you really think you can learn from looking at Mass attendance just one day a year? You cannot make judgements about how each Mass time is meeting the needs of the community, and you cannot make an educated decision about what month is better to hold certain events or promote important projects.

WHAT ZIP CODES ARE REPRESENTED?

If you truly have a community that is feeding people spiritually and clearly communicating a mission and vision, then people will travel a decent distance to join you. How healthy is the spiritual life of the parish that only has parishioners who are willing to travel 5 minutes? When people find something worth belonging to, they are willing to travel great distances to get there.

MEDIAN AGE

Much about the health of a church community can be seen in looking at the median age of the population. More important than the current number is looking at that number over the last 5 years. In those numbers are clues to the effectiveness of reaching out to millennials, young families with children, and singles. Are we effectively evangelizing in our area to bring people into full communion?

WHO IS RECEIVING THE SACRAMENTS?

So what sacramental numbers matter more? How many people in the last 12 months have been anointed? How about how many people are coming to the sacrament of Penance? The numbers we all keep on sacramental records do have value in terms of the big picture. However, if we stop there, we miss out on the data that can give us real feedback of how well we are bringing people into a more mature faith.

OFFERTORY TRENDS

The data collected week after week about your offertory is a valuable barometer of the parish's level of engagement and buy-in to a mission and vision. This data becomes even more valuable when looked at in the light of additional data such as we have discussed. Looking at how your offertory numbers are trending will provide insight into what the majority of your congregation is thinking and feeling.

BE WISE AND PLAN, BUT HAVE A WISE PLAN

The baseball Hall of Famer Yogi Berra said, "If you don't know where you are going, you will end up someplace else." Unfortunately, too many parishes find themselves *someplace else*. A planning process is not easy and requires commitment, research, hard work, and time.

If a parish is willing to do the work in creating a plan — whether it be for one, three, or five years — it should do so in a wise manner. Data helps us see where we have been, and where we are now, and can help us dream of where we could go. We will not get there by simply seeing what happens next. God has given every church community gifts and a command to use them to proclaim the Gospel. If we are good stewards, we will use all that has been given to us wisely. The Holy Spirit will always lead us, but the path will be more easily discerned if we have a plan.



MINDSET MATTERS

BY KATIE HERZING, OSV SENIOR PARISH COACH



"If you think you can or you think you can't, you're right"- Henry Ford.

Even before I became a parish coach, I was addicted to spiritual memoirs, self-help books, personal growth, and inspirational quotes. Now those things along with how other people are doing things are my life-blood.

You might be wondering why we're talking about personal growth and mindsets here in the Stewardship Wisdom. You might be thinking that this doesn't matter. You might be thinking that it's irrelevant. You might have a 'fixed mindset.'

What do I mean by that? Well, a 'fixed mindset' says that things just are the way they are, I can't do anything to change them, I've tried to change them in the past and failed, so that's just how it is. There are a lot of Catholics who have this mindset ... "this is how we've always done it so that's how we're going to do it."

Let me share a little story from one of my parishes to illustrate my point:

One of my priest friends was telling me about a major dispute that came about in his parish regarding where the pies should be placed in the kitchen prior to serving them. He said one woman who had been a parishioner for several years left the parish because a newcomer to the parish had convinced the rest of the people working in the kitchen that it would be more efficient to put the pies on the counter beside the sink instead of the counter next to the refrigerator.

Name withheld to protect those who love pies and order

Although that story probably made you chuckle, I bet you could also name the man or woman at your parish who just 'likes the pies where he/she likes the pies.' It's fixed. It won't change. It shouldn't change.

The alternative is a 'growth mindset' where you are always seeking how we can make this better, doing something different, changing the process to see a better outcome, and growing and transforming as a parish.

We might even divide these into two different categories of stubborn and flexible. We could call one a prideful attitude (I'll let you determine which one I'm talking about).

The 'fixed mindset' (or prideful one, did you get that right?) thinks the following when presented with a new way of doing things at the parish: "I've been doing everything well for the past 34 years. Our programs serve all those who are interested. I don't know how much more I could fit on my plate.

I do everything that's asked of me by my pastor, volunteers, participants, etc. Everyone who attends our ministry/programs/events is actively engaged. I can't worry about those who don't take advantage of what we offer. I've tried other things before, and they always fail. The pies must be by the fridge."

The 'growth mindset' thinks: "I hope this will encourage more people to be engaged in their faith. I'm looking forward to the feedback we're going to receive from the parish about how we can grow and change. I can't wait to try a few new things with the pastor's permission to do it even if it fails. I'm excited about bringing in new people and re-engaging fallen away Catholics. I'm happy to learn new things. Let's put the pies over by the sink."

The first is detrimental to growth; the second flourishes in it. The first is still doing the same thing ten years later; the second doesn't even recognize the parish in ten years. The first is people-led; the second is Spirit-led.

What's Your Mindset?

Read more about any of these ideas, and more, at transformyourparish.com or click the read more links in the article above.