

February 2020



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:

- * four trends in Catholic philanthropy that may surprise you courtesy of **GP Catholic Services**.
- * how to use humor to delight and inform your parish compliments of **J.S. Paluch Company**.
- * the four C's of stewardship communication from **LPi**.
- * tips for keeping your New Year's resolutions compliments of **Lynch Development Associates**.
- * how to engage the generosity of your millennial parishioners provided by **Pushpay**.

For additional information and resources from our strategic partners visit the ICSC website at: [ICSC](https://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.

Understanding How Catholics Give

Four trends in Catholic philanthropy that may surprise you

1. Mass attendance is not fully correlated with giving

Though Mass attendance does have impact on likelihood of giving, don't overlook those who attend infrequently.

✚ **Consider targeted appeals** to these members of the faithful. Resource appropriately, measure your results, and benchmark year over year.

✚ **Develop empathy**, remembering that for some people, attending Mass a few times a year represents an increase from previous years. Your stewardship efforts can further strengthen this relationship.

✚ **Find joy in the wins.** Celebrate when an infrequent Mass attendee makes a gift! Send a handwritten thank you note or make a personal phone call.

If someone attends Mass once a week or more, they're very likely to be a member of a household that regularly gives to its parish. However, don't discount infrequent Mass attendees. There is a one-in-five chance that they are a member of a household that regularly gives to its parish.

2. A narrative focused on mission has greater impact than one focused on scarcity

How we talk about money and mission matters, and it is likely to inspire more donors to give, and to give more.

✚ **Model and encourage active spiritual engagement** with personal, parish, and diocesan finances.

✚ **Foster a collaborative culture** where ownership of the mission of the parish and diocese naturally leads to opportunities to give.

✚ **Frame asks** as invitations for the faithful to participate in living out the mission of the Church, rather than lists of bills to be paid.

Nearly half of Catholics report that their parishes and dioceses articulate appeals focused on scarcity.

3. The more local the need, the better

Catholics are more than twice as likely to consider the needs of their parish and the poor as giving priorities than they are the needs of their diocese.

✚ **Emphasize the ways a gift will benefit the parish** first and the poor second when making an ask or planning an appeal.

✚ **Remind your congregation** that parishes don't individually educate seminarians or care for retired priests, but that this is done collectively for the benefit of all in the diocese.

✚ **Don't make assumptions.** Take care not to surmise that every recipient of an appeal is equally informed on the details of the workings of their diocese in relation to a parish.

Catholics list supporting their local parish and giving to the poor among their top reasons for making a gift.

4. A personal, customized approach is the best method

The more familiar the solicitor, the greater likelihood a Catholic will make a gift. A personal ask is always the best approach.

✚ **Consider creating a parish or diocesan development committee** if you do not have one.

✚ **Recruit parishioners** to make asks alongside the pastor.

✚ **Provide joint development training** for both parishioners and pastors alike.

Seventy-three percent of Catholics say they would be "somewhat" or "very" likely to respond to a family member or friend who asked for a financial gift to 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.

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

4C'S

OF STEWARDSHIP COMMUNICATION

2. CONSISTENT



CONSISTENT COMMUNICATIONS

It takes great care to be consistent in your communications, but the payoff can be great. Parishes who have the greatest success have read through all the latest literature out there and have crafted a message that is uniquely theirs ... and they stick with it.

4. CREATIVE



CREATIVE COMMUNICATIONS

If you are going to be successful at the first three C's, you are going to have to be creative. You must strive to find fresh new ways of communicating your message. Jesus and his Gospel remain the same, but how we share that can and must change as the world changes. Attention spans are shrinking, and competition for space in people's hearts and minds is stronger than ever.

1. CONCRETE



CONCRETE COMMUNICATIONS

When communicating to people about what living this life is all about, be willing to issue concrete challenges to the parish population. Set goals for what you want to accomplish and in what time period. A parish that is trying to build a stewardship culture needs to have a pastoral plan, simply because having no plan is poor stewardship. How can we be accountable for all God gives us if we have no plan on how to cultivate, grow, and use it?

3. CONSTANT



CONSTANT COMMUNICATIONS

Are we calling people to a way of life or to respond to a commitment card once a year? If it is a way of life, a parish cannot have "stewardship month" and be successful in bearing great fruit. This calling to a mature discipleship, where we can say yes to the daily call of Jesus, needs to be communicated 12 months out of the year. We may use campaigns and commitment cards in our parishes as tools to call people to accountability, but these tools cannot become synonymous with the term stewardship.

Happy New Year!

Have You Broken Your Resolution Yet?

Many of us start each new year with vigor and enthusiasm for a fresh start and big dreams for the coming 12 months. We make resolutions with the intention of achieving better health, happiness and prosperity. As church leaders, we may also make resolutions for our dioceses, schools and parishes. "This year we will... be debt free; grow our endowment; raise the funds to finally tackle those much needed renovations to our campus." We can all fill in the blank, right? Yet, studies show that by about this time, in February, less than 25% of us remain committed to those resolutions and only 8% ever accomplish them. Failed resolutions can not only be discouraging, they can be very costly and may be detrimental to your mission.

Here are some tips for keeping your New Year's resolutions this year!

Make a List

Define your resolution and write things down. This will help you to organize your thoughts and begin to make them more concrete.

Break it Down

Your full plan may get overwhelming. Break it down into smaller more manageable steps with reasonable deadlines. Remember though, the longer you wait; the higher the project costs, the more deferred maintenance damage can be done, and, your ministries may lose an opportunity to grow and serve.

Communicate and Solicit Input

Gather and put to good use the various gifts of your community! Sharing your ideas with others will help you to shape them, solidify them and gain much needed support. It is also important to hear the views and dreams of those around you. An added benefit to sharing with others is accountability. Naturally, bringing in others will create an excitement and momentum that will help keep you on track and moving forward!

Refine Your Plan

Now that you have support, formally articulate your goals and then, decide what must be done in order for you to achieve those goals.

Just Do It!

It's more than just a slogan! All of the pieces are in place for you to take action. Consider utilizing professional counsel. An expert will not only lend their valuable input, but they will keep you on track, maximize your potential and ultimately bring your vision to fruition.

Contact us for a free consultation:

L · D · A
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Let's explore your full capital potential!

25 CELEBRATING
YEARS

The Gift of Laughter

How to Use Humor to Delight and Inform Your Parish

St. Lawrence, upon being arrested by the Roman tribunals in 258 AD, was sentenced to die by being roasted over a fire. When it took an exceedingly long time for him to die, he yelled to his executioner, "Turn me over! I am done on this side." Even in martyrdom he found humor in the human condition.

Too often, it is easy to get caught up in the daily communication of parish life and forget to inject a little humor, but a little levity can go a long way toward making your words memorable. Here are a few simple tips for using humor as part of your communication strategy:

Be Topical. When you use humor in your communications, try to match it to the type of communications at hand. Is the youth group talk this week about confession? Find a funny meme to match. Sending out a reminder for Ash Wednesday? Find a funny meme (like this one.)

Be charitable. Being topical does not mean calling out individuals or groups directly or using them as the butt of a joke. Always find a charitable way to make light of the situation. Self-deprecating humor can be great here. For good examples, consider the work of Jim Gaffigan, a hilarious human being known for his relatable self-deprecating humor.

Find sources of inspiration. Memes are a wellspring of humor in the digital age, and there are great sources available all over the place. Catholic Memes on Facebook and Reddit's CatholicMemes group are both great resources for witty humor to share. CatholicHumor on Facebook and Twitter has a new content regularly as well.

Humor is a gift from God - let us use it! As my grandfather liked to say, "God is the creator of humor as well. Remember, we're talking about the inventor of the platypus."

Captain's Log, Day 39:

Roasted Unicorn is delicious.

