



INSTITUTE OF SCHOOL & PARISH DEVELOPMENT

Bringing People, Process, and Ministry Together to Build the

Kingdom of God.

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Development Directions

By

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Looking at Ways of Funding Our Catholic Parishes

The past two newsletters (February 2010 and March 2010) we have devoted to the topic of funding Catholic schools. As we discussed in the last issue, there is a lot to discuss, and hopefully these options are being put out on the table on a diocesan level, and open, honest discussion is taking place.

Over the past 20 years, we have spent countless hours working with parishes throughout the country. A lot of the work has been in long-range planning, and a lot has been in organizing and running capital campaigns. Today, with this economy, we hear a lot of cries coming from pastors and finance councils. They mainly have this to say:

1. "Our Sunday collections are down."
2. "More and more people are defaulting on their capital campaign payment because they were laid off."
3. "Our festival did not do quite as well as we did two years ago."
4. "Our diocese is going to launch a direct mail effort and we're going to send letters to all of our parishioners to try and get the collections up."
5. "We need a better stewardship effort."
6. "Maybe we need to add another fund-raiser or two."
7. "Well, I guess I need to address this more from the pulpit."

There are many approaches and many angles and many different ways – simply because there are many different cultures in each of our Catholic parishes. Some things may work in New Orleans, and they may not work in Cincinnati or Denver. That said, here at ISPD, we believe that parishes need to build their infrastructure around eight components. We also realize that this will take time and will not be done overnight, but in this newsletter, let's at least lay down the frame work.

Right now, we find that **most** parishes concentrate on two methods of seeking revenue that will balance the budget:

1. Sunday collections with envelopes (Sometimes called “stewardship” or “sacrificial giving.”) usually built around direct mail and/or information given out at Mass
2. Special event fund-raiser(s) like a fair or festival

ARE WE READY TO SHIFT THE PARADIGM AND REALLY CHANGE THE CULTURE OF OUR PARISH?

Before any process can be implemented, we believe that four things need to begin to be put in place.

1. The parish should have some kind of long-range plan in place that will allow the leadership to identify, prioritize, and involve families in planning for the future of their Catholic parish.
2. Possibly growing out of the long-range plan, the parish must do everything it possibly can to put its best foot forward and establish a “people engagement” process – one that is warm, welcoming and inviting. The “culture” of that parish needs to be built around *belonging leads to believing*. ALL parish families need to be welcomed, greeted and engaged in the life of the parish. Here at ISPD we have written, created, and done so much in this area. We invite you to visit our website and view the free information with DVDs, newsletters, and more.
3. As part of the above, parish leaders (pastor, parish council members, finance council members, Core Team members – in groups of 2) need to meet with EVERY PARISH FAMILY – ONE ON ONE – both brand new and those who are already parishioners. This meeting should take place in their home or as last resort at the parish. At this meeting, four things should take place:
 - The parish family should be informed about pertinent information that would be applicable to their situation (retreats, religious education opportunities, schedules, calendar events, Small Church Communities, etc.)
 - The parish family should be invited to identify the gifts they would enjoy sharing with their home parish.
 - Parish finances should be explained and the different ways they can financially participate should be suggested.
 - In the second part of this meeting the parish leaders need to ask: “Mr. and Mrs. Johnson, as members of this faith community, is there anything with which we can be of service to you? Or anything you would like for us to help you with?”This will take time, but here is where you will really begin to build community and surge ahead with a strong people engagement process.
4. A formal Parish Development/Stewardship “office” needs to be put in place. This can be done with volunteers, part-time or full-time persons. You will need to begin with the Core Team. The key is that there must be a person responsible for moving this effort forward, and there must be a designated place in the parish where people can call, go and/or communicate.

With the above four begun (not totally completed!), you will have 10x more chance for success with the following eight funding processes.

1. Total Stewardship
 - As we have said many times, the Total Stewardship process is a 12 month effort and should be built around Gifts of Prayer, Gifts of Involvement, and Gifts of Financial Participation. Total Stewardship is when the entire parish is engaged in the invitation process and not just those who sit in the pews on the weekend.
2. Fund-Raising event(s)
 - Every parish should have 1-3 fund-raising events that do three things:
 - Raise good net dollars
 - Identify and surface new leadership
 - Build community
3. Parish Annual Fund
 - This is the one most parishes miss out on. They believe that this is just for the schools. Not so! A parish can have a collaborative Annual Fund with the school, or if there is no school, they can have an Annual Fund where the funds generated will go to “pro-active” items that cannot normally be funded in the operation budget – new covered walkway, new missals, replacing worn kneelers, etc. *This is NOT to be confused with Gifts of Financial Participation in the Total Stewardship process.*
4. Capital Campaign
 - When it is time for an infusion of money to build, renovate, refurbish, etc., the capital campaign is an excellent process that can be put in place and implemented. It takes time and should grow out of long-range planning.
5. Memorial Giving
 - Parishes need to offer the opportunity for their families to memorialize family members and friends. So often we hear people who have lost a loved one who indicate that they wish the parish had something in place so they could remember the person who passed away.
6. Planned Giving
 - Planned and/or deferred giving is all part of the above vehicles; however, it is important that each parish establish a Planned Giving Council and educate parish families on the many opportunities that could be available. At the very least, reminding families to keep the parish in mind when they write their will. Usually, diocesan offices can help with this, and most parishes have the expertise to move this forward.
7. Parish Endowment
 - Fueled either through major gifts, capital campaign or planned gifts, we believe that each parish needs to strive to establish a 7-figure endowment that could be used for future ministries, programs, outreach, capital improvements, etc. The goal here is to keep the corpus in place, and ONLY use the money made from the investment of that principal.
8. Major Gift Process
 - As part of a vibrant parish development/stewardship effort should be the establishment of a Major Gift Process. In this process, the pastor, and other parish leaders, would identify those 1-2-3 or 20 members or more of the parish who have indicated a willingness to financially step forward. There are

usually a handful of parish families who have the financial wherewithal to get involved but they do not and it is only because of one reason: no one clearly articulates the need and personally invites them. A Major Gift Process would stay on top of this.

The above is not done overnight. We do invite you to visit our website, as we have written and spoken a lot about this. We have webinars, newsletters, DVDs, CDs and more. Isn't it time we really took a look at expanding the financial and people horizons of our Catholic parishes and not just depend upon appeals from the pulpit, fairs and festivals, and the latest wave of direct mail letters?