

## XII. PARISH DEVELOPMENT

This chapter offers an introduction to Parish Development concepts that will strengthen ongoing financial support including increased offertory collections, stewardship, and planned giving. It also offers a description of the Annual Bishop's Appeal and the process for the Parish to consider conducting a capital/endowment campaign.

The Diocesan Development Office aims to collaborate with the Parish to approach leading prospects with the capability for donations of \$50,000 and above.

### 1. Increased Offertory Campaigns

#### 1.1 Introduction

An increased offertory campaign is a vital program that can boost Parish support, create important stewardship opportunities for parishioners and help the Parish family grow and prosper.

#### 1.2 Process

The most common increased offertory campaign involves direct mail solicitations coupled with pulpit and bulletin announcements.

#### 1.3 Sample Program

The increased offertory program is conducted over a three-week period to include a homily presentation by the Pastor and witness presentations by individual parishioners. Following the presentations, parishioners receive personal letters to request an increase in offertory giving.

##### *Weekend 1: Pastor Introduces Program*

- The Pastor encourages parishioners to become aware of the need for their participation in all areas of Parish life, including financial support.
- Review the current financial status of the Parish and the need to increase the offertory.
- Outline the relationship between the weekly offertory collection and the operating budget.



- Following the homily, all registered parishioners receive personalized letters from the Pastor that restates the themes from the homily and requests increased financial support through the Sunday collection.

*Weekend 2: Witness Presentations by Individual Parishioners*

- Select parishioners speak at Mass about their involvement in the Parish and understanding of the importance to support the weekly offertory collection.
- The presentation offers an explanation of Parish services, including important programs for children, young adults, families, and seniors.
- Following the presentations, parishioners receive a second letter from the Pastor that reinforces the themes of the previous week. This letter also includes a commitment card and return envelope.

*Weekend 3: In-Pew Sunday*

- Celebrant recaps the current process and the need to increase the offertory and thanks those who have already returned their commitment card to the Parish.
- Commitment cards are provided in the pews and time is allotted following the homily for parishioners to complete the cards.
- Ushers should be encouraged to collect the commitment cards with the basket.

*Program Follow-Up*

- Approximately one month later, the Pastor should mail a personal letter of appreciation to those parishioners with completed and returned commitment cards.
- A follow-up mailing could then be coordinated to those individuals who have not responded, along with another commitment card.
- All commitment cards should be recorded and filed for review later in the year.



## 2. Stewardship

### 2.1 Introduction

Stewardship is an important priority for active Parish life. Parishioners are invited to participate in a spiritual journey by sharing their individual time, talent, and treasure to their Parish family.

### 2.2 Process

Stewardship is more than offering contributions to address the important operation and maintenance of our Church. It is encouraged to serve as a way of living. It is comprised of four parts:

- Receiving the gifts of God with gratitude.
- Cultivating those gifts responsibly.
- Sharing gifts lovingly in justice with others.
- Standing before Our Lord in a spirit of accountability.

### 2.3 Important Questions to Consider

- What resources, talents, and abilities has God given me, and do I use them in service to others?
- What qualities in the life of Jesus provide a model for living and an example of good stewardship? How might they compare to my own life and lived experience?
- To be an effective Steward, what will it cost in terms of personal sacrifice?
- How am I reaching out to invite others to recognize their gifts?

### 2.4 Key Components of the Parish Stewardship Process

- The Parish should recruit a Stewardship Committee comprised of parishioners willing to meet once per month, read and study the U.S. Bishops' Pastoral Letter, reflect on Scriptural passages, and work in a group process of prayer, consensus building, and planning for approximately two years.
- Parishioners should be encouraged to complete a Parish Stewardship Assessment Guide (*see Appendix at the end of this chapter*).



- The Pastor prepares a letter to parishioners to introduce concepts of Stewardship along with Time & Talent Reflection Sheets (*see the Appendix at the end of this chapter*).
- A Parish Directory of Ministries is established and shared with parishioners.
- Parishioners are encouraged to make personal commitments of Gifts/Talents for the coming year.
- The Pastor prepares a letter of introduction before Financial Stewardship Commitment Weekend.
- The Parish Finance Council offers a Parish Pastoral Report during Financial Stewardship Commitment Weekend and parishioners are encouraged to pledge support.
- On a quarterly basis, a reminder letter is mailed from the Pastor with a report on Financial Stewardship donations.



### 3. Planned Giving

#### 3.1 Introduction

Planned Giving is a wonderful tool that can enable donors to reach more significant levels of giving to the Parish than they ever dreamed possible, while at the same time producing an income stream for the donor or a designee.

A properly planned gift may:

- Provide an income for life for the donor or a designee.
- Reduce or eliminate capital gains taxes.
- Generate a charitable income tax deduction.
- Reduce or eliminate gift and estate taxes.
- Provide a much larger gift to the Parish than was ever thought possible.

#### 3.2 Types of Planned Gifts

- **Bequests** are an important option for parishioners to consider ensuring the vitality of the Parishes for many years to come. Many donors, after evaluating family and philanthropic goals, make bequests to their Parish to help support many vital programs. Bequests (also referred to as **Testamentary Gifts**) are gifts that take effect at someone's death. Donors can simply name their Parish as the beneficiary of a charitable gift contained in a will, revocable "living" trust, or on a beneficiary designation form for life insurance or a retirement account.
- **Life Income Gifts** benefit both the Parish and the donor. Donors may receive numerous tax and financial benefits by creating a life income gift, such as a **charitable gift annuity** or **charitable remainder trust**. The donor makes an irrevocable contribution of assets to fund the trust or annuity, gets an immediate income tax deduction for part of the contribution's value, and receives income for life or a term of between 1 and 20 years. When the trust or annuity term ends, the remaining assets can be directed to support the Parish.



- **Charitable Lead Trusts** can make an agreed payment to the Parish for a specific term of years or for someone's life. Thereafter, the lead trust assets are either returned to the person who created the lead trust (this person also receives an income tax deduction when the trust is created) or passed on to children, grandchildren, or other loved ones (applicable estate or gift taxes on the value of the gift to the child or other heir are reduced or completely eliminated).
- **Outright gifts** of assets other than cash and publicly-traded securities can have differing tax consequences depending upon how long that asset has been held, and whether it is related to the charitable purposes of the Parish. These questions should be evaluated prior to making the gift. The Diocesan Development Office can help assess and direct a gift of tangible personal property, privately-held securities, or real estate so that it meets philanthropic goals.

### 3.3 Tax Facts

Helpful information is available from the Internal Revenue Service at [www.irs.gov](http://www.irs.gov) under "Forms and Publications." For examples, please access:

- I.R.S. Publication: "Charitable Contributions"
- I.R.S. Publication: "Determining the Value of Donated Property"
- I.R.S. Form 8283: "Non-cash Charitable Contributions" (a.k.a. "appraisal summary")



## **4. Annual Bishop's Appeal**

### **4.1 Introduction**

The Annual Bishop's Appeal provides the single most important source of funds for Diocesan-wide programs and services for the needy; training for seminarians; services for clergy and religious; and support of instruction for our children in Catholic schools and Parish religious education programs.

Funding from the Annual Bishop's Appeal establishes new opportunities and services for Parishes such as the Pastoral Plan for Evangelization, "Following in the Footsteps of Christ." Bishop William Lori's vision for the Church in Fairfield County continues to expand Diocesan programs that support our Parishes, Catholic Charities, Religious Education, and many other critical ministries.

### **4.2 Process**

- The Appeal begins the first week of February or March and continues through June 30<sup>th</sup>.
- Parishioners receive a solicitation letter from the Bishop along with a brochure outlining the programs and services supported by the campaign.
- Each Parish promotes the Appeal during Mass, at receptions, through In-Pew weekends, personal visits, and phone calls.
- Diocesan Development Staff work together with Pastors and Parish administrators and provides materials and a Pastors' Guide and other resources to help each Parish achieve its goal.



## 5. Capital/Endowment Campaigns

### 5.1 Introduction

A Parish capital/endowment fundraising campaign is defined as any Parish effort, which seeks to raise an amount of at least twice the Parish's annual offertory income in pledges payable over three-to-five years. The funds raised may be used for new construction, renovations or restoration, debt reduction or retirement, restricted/unrestricted endowment, special programs, or other capital needs.

### 5.2 Approval Process

- **Fundraising for Construction, Renovation, Repair, or Restoration Projects.** If the purpose of the fundraising is for the renovation, repair, or restoration of Parish property, or new construction on Parish property, the process for approval of the fundraising program is set forth in the *Building & Sacred Arts Commission Guidelines Binder*.
- **Fundraising for Debt Reduction or Retirement, Endowments, Special Programs, or Other Capital Needs Projects.** If the fundraising is for a project not subject to the Diocesan Building & Sacred Arts Commission process, a letter requesting approval should be sent to the Bishop's Office outlining the project and fundraising effort. The Bishop will consult with Diocesan Finance Services and Diocesan Development, as necessary, and request any required additional information from the Pastor. After consideration, the Bishop will inform the Pastor of his decision on the Parish's request for approval of the fundraising campaign.
- Commitment by the Pastor/Parish to raise funds should not be made until the appropriate approval has been provided.
- The Diocesan Development Office and the Office of the Bishop should be aware of all donors identified for gift solicitations at \$50,000 and above.

### Feasibility Study

Prior to the conduct of a capital campaign, a Feasibility Study must be conducted to determine the Parish's ability to complete a successful





capital campaign. It will be important to communicate with the Diocesan Development Executive Director to confirm the Feasibility Study process.

The results of the Feasibility Study will be communicated to the Office of the Bishop for final approval to proceed with a capital/endowment campaign.

Feasibility Studies and Capital Campaigns require coordination with the Diocesan Development Office.

### **5.3 Conducting Capital/Endowment Campaigns**

All individual gift requests of \$50,000 and above should be submitted for review to the Diocesan Development Office.

Parishes should hire fundraising consultants for all capital/endowment fundraising campaign goals as defined in section 5.1 above.

The Annual Bishop's Appeal is *recommended* to be included in the overall campaign total for the year that pledges are requested. In this way, parishioners will avoid being solicited twice in a single year.

