



February 2009

Development Directions

A free resource for pastors, principals, development directors, volunteers and anyone engaged in the ministry of Catholic development.

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Organic Gardening and Catholic Development

By Frank Donaldson, President

Since Hurricane Katrina, my wife and 10 year old daughter and I have been living out in the country on a 25 acre piece of land that has been in our family since the 1940's. It is where I grew up, and where I eventually returned. It is a beautiful piece of property right in the heart of south Louisiana close to the Mississippi state line. In August 2005, when the hurricane destroyed much of our home near Lake Pontchartrain, we made the decision to go ahead and speed up the building plans we had for the future and build a log home on the property my Dad and Mom had left to me and my brother. It is 15 miles north of where we used to live, very high ground, and not in a flood zone. After living in a little 600 square foot guest house (that had been on the property since 1961) for two years after Katrina while this house was being built, we finally moved in to our new home in July 2007.

Being right on Morgan's River, which runs into the Pearl about ½ mile down from us, we are blessed with wonderful fishing, bird watching, and the ability to walk out of our back door and see wood ducks swimming with their young as they paddle down the bayou. I thank God every day for the foresight my parents had in finding and buying this property - which back in 1942 sold for \$400.00 per acre.

One of the mainstays of the farm has always been the 1 acre garden that my Dad used to manage and take care of up until the year he passed away in 2003 at the ripe old age of 98. For years and years, that garden provided some of the best meals we ever ate. During the summer time, we never ran out of sweet corn, tomatoes, cucumbers, pole beans, field peas, squash, okra, peppers, cantaloupes, and watermelons. In the fall and winter, we always had plenty of lettuce, mustard greens, collard greens, turnip greens, potatoes, broccoli, cauliflower, carrots, and swiss chard. The spring garden was filled with the same; it was a year round venture.

I was lucky to learn the little I do know from my Dad; he had the green thumb, even up to making sure we harvested our own honey from the bee hives he kept around the property - making sure the bees pollinated the many vegetable flowers growing in the garden. It was a wonderful learning experience growing up with a father who had an intense love of the land and the ability to grow almost anything that the climate of south Louisiana could produce.

Although he probably did not think I was paying any attention at all, I observed the many, many hours he spent *developing* his garden - day by day, week by week, month by month, and year by year. This was not a *program* where one year he said, "Let's grow some G-90 sweet corn." No, this was a process that started early on in his life - a keen recognition that in order to be successful he had to identify the best crops to grow in this climate, make sure the soil was tested for the proper chemical balance, and then based upon those results, prepare that soil with the best fertilizers for that environment. He had to cultivate the ground and then till it up. Afterwards, he had to organize his garden and decide where everything would go. He had to set up the rows and know how high each one needed to be. He had to know when to plant each crop, whether or not to start them inside in a seed bed or go ahead and plant them straight into the ground. He had to know how far to space the seeds in a row, and which vegetables did best when grown together or next to each other. Once in the ground, the work was just beginning, because being an organic gardener, he did not use pesticides or anything poisonous. He had to watch each crop daily and make adjustments with the right kind of organic dust to rid the plants of dangerous insects. He had to make sure to nurture everything he planted, making sure to hoe away all of the grass and weeds and be quick to pick off any foreign bugs off of the leaves. With certain crops, he needed to know when to pick them and when they were ready. With some - like broccoli, squash, okra, and greens - by picking them at the right time, it allowed for further development and more of the same.

After many of the crops had run their course, Dad would always make sure that he saved some of the seeds, dried them out, and got them ready for use for the next year. Many of the vegetables perpetuated themselves into an ever-evolving cycle of production and reproduction. As a child and as a teenager, it was fascinating to watch, especially at the side of a man who was the master at selecting, nurturing, cultivating, preparing, and planning for the long term. He knew it was not a quick fix process; the true organic gardener took his/her time and made sure everything was part of a process that completed the entire system.

The parallels between organic gardening and Catholic Development are quite remarkable. On the wrong side of the row, many in the development and/or advancement and/or stewardship world think it is all about money. They want the quick fix - they want to mail out that direct mail newsletter with a brochure and pledge card and get that money back. They want to go ahead and launch that capital campaign by going to the top donors and asking for their dollars without involving and engaging them. They do not see the value of building community with a capital campaign. They expect families to stay on as parents and students in their school without treating them with *customer service*. The list goes on and on.

People need to be nurtured for a lifetime. As Catholic leaders, we need to constantly identify people and work with them and help them find and share their gifts of expertise, time, talent, wisdom, and financial participation. Many people have many different gifts that are not all shared at the same time in their lives. For some, the gift of money is not appropriate at certain stages of their life, and yet the gift of expertise and wisdom is, and should be honored just as much as that gift of money. *True Catholic Development is not a smokescreen for money*. It is all about identifying, inviting, nurturing, cultivating, and perpetuating a lifelong relationship as a true steward. The seeds of the G-90 corn are not put into the ground and then hundreds of ears picked the next week. There is a lot to the process, and the beautiful part, is that - if handled correctly - it should never end. People, like plants, need to be nurtured for a life time.

ISPD Webinar Back by Popular Request: "Successful Catholic Development in Tough Economic Times"

With the success of our Webinar on February 23rd with over 500 people in attendance, we will once again offer this same topic on **Thursday, April 2, 2009, from 10:00 AM - 11:00 AM CENTRAL STANDARD TIME**. This is a free Webinar, and all you have to do is visit our website at www.ISPD.com and register. Other Webinar offerings are also listed on the ISPD website. We invite you to join us.

- [Visit our Website to Register for a Webinar Today!](#)

ISPD 15 MIN Educational DVDs on Catholic Development Free upon Request

- *An Introduction to Long-Range Planning for Catholic Parishes*
- *An Introduction to Long-Range, Strategic Planning for Catholic Schools*
- *An Introduction to ISPD's Total Stewardship Process*
- *Creating the Strategic Plan for Development for Parishes and Schools*
- *Inviting, Involving, and Engaging More People into the Life of Your Catholic Parish*
- *Getting Ready for a Capital Campaign, Part I*
- *Implementing a Capital Campaign, Part II*

To receive your free 15 minute DVD, please visit the [Resource Center](#) on our website.

ISPD OFFERS FREE SERVICE: A Place for You to Announce Job Openings in Catholic Development, Advancement and Total Stewardship

ISPD is pleased to offer a free service to any Catholic parish, school or diocese. We have a new button on our website entitled [Development Job Postings](#). By clicking on this button, visitors can go directly to this page and view job announcements and opportunities from area Catholic institutions. Twice per month in our two newsletters, ISPD will highlight this opportunity and invite readers to view these announcements. These newsletters reach over 11,000 Catholic leaders by e-mail each month.

Each announcement should be no more than 200 words and should invite people to submit a resume to your specific address (e-mail or physical). We ask that you mail new requests (with the announcement attached in a Microsoft Word document) to ISPD@aol.com, including the name of your contact person and a telephone number where we can reach you, just in case we need clarification on the announcement. Announcements will be put in alphabetical order by institution.

- [Click here to read more about these job opportunities in Catholic development](#)

CATHOLIC SCHOOL ENROLLMENT TALK

ISPD is your Catholic School Enrollment Solution for maintaining and/or increasing the quantity, quality, or diversity of your elementary or secondary Catholic school enrollment. *Catholic School Enrollment Talk* is our free monthly online newsletter for anyone interested in Catholic school enrollment solutions.

- [Subscribe today!](#)

SPRING 2009 WORKSHOPS

ISPD WORKSHOPS DELVE INTO DEPTH

The one and two day workshops presented by ISPD offer Catholic leaders throughout the country an in-depth experience on a specific topic. For more than twenty years, ISPD has been this country's leader in offering process-driven workshops that are practical, affordable, and interactive. 98% of all ISPD workshops receive a rating of 4 or 5 (out of a 1-5 rating system) by those in attendance. This spring ISPD will be presenting workshops on capital campaigns, engaging more people into the life of a Catholic parish, the best first steps in Catholic Development, enrollment solutions, long-range planning, and much more. Please visit our web site at www.ispd.com for the latest information and also to register on line.

ISPD Also Conducts On-Site Workshops

Offered to Catholic schools and parishes within a single diocese, these workshops are designed to meet your specific needs.

- [Check Here for More Information on ISPD Development Workshops](#)

ISPD - Bringing people, process and ministry together to build the Kingdom of God

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Visit our web site for free resources and valuable information.

The Institute of School and Parish Development (ISPD) is a national, Catholic development consulting firm created to serve Catholic schools, parishes and dioceses in the areas of planning, marketing, fund-raising, and resource development.

Please feel free to forward this newsletter to anyone you think could benefit from this information. If there are any topics you would like to see covered in a future newsletter, please contact us.

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