



June 2005

Development Directions

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

A TRUE STORY OF A PASTOR WHO STUCK HIS NECK OUT (and did not get it chopped off)

NOTE: Throughout our work here at ISPD, we are always impressed by the leadership qualities that many pastors possess - all throughout the country. They inspire us, and, obviously, they inspire the people for whom they are responsible. A couple of years ago, in working with one pastor, he expressed the need to do and say something different. You see, his small rural parish was about to launch a \$1,000,000+ campaign in order to restore the church to its original and beautiful form, plus do some other renovations. Father had talked about the fact that many of his parishioners were fine people, but many had not grabbed on to the fact that they were a faith community. Few had ever heard those words, and so on the day of the kick-off reception to launch this Campaign, he stood up in front of his parish families and delivered the following message.

Good morning. Today I would like to speak with you about a topic that goes to the very core of what we are as a parish. It is also a topic that, quite frankly, I do not understand in terms of having the answers. It is one of the most puzzling, perplexing and difficult areas to define and figure out. I will tell you exactly what I am speaking about in a few minutes; however, please hear me out.

Almost two years ago we began a vibrant development effort in this parish and school. Early on, we defined development as, "the meaningful involvement of people in our mission and vision for the future." And, we have used that definition as the anchor for our development efforts. We assembled a Core Team of 15-20 people; we went through a planning process with 50-75 people; we held input sessions and a parish assembly; we sought opinions from a parish-wide survey and hundreds responded on paper; we have made a commitment to having a parish and school development office with a development director; and, over the past 2-3 months we have invited people to help us tell the story of how we can move into the next century by addressing many of our facility needs on all of our sites. And, this building drive for our parish is only one step along the journey of developing our parish for the future. Only one step, not **the** step.

YES, people have filled out the survey; YES, some people have said YES to coming to input sessions, and YES we have had some people step forward and serve as campaign volunteers. However, when it comes to the majority of this parish community stepping forward and becoming a family that will build and grow for the future, that is where the difficulty lies. And, I don't understand. I don't understand

the reluctance when people are invited to meet and greet and visit and get to know other people and they cannot find the time or the will or the way. I don't understand how we can call ourselves a community when the very word is built around being together with people and getting to know each other better. As Christians, I don't understand how we can turn our heads the other way when someone invites us to be part of something wonderful for our parish.

I have all kinds of questions with no answers: Do we live in such a skeptical and cynical society that we are not able to respond to a genuine invitation to be a neighbor and a friend? Is there any chance to break out of this mold? Is there a way that many of us can say YES when we are invited? Are we able to accept an invitation and realize that maybe - just maybe - there are no hidden motives?

Let's put the cards on the table. I am your pastor. I am like a conductor, and you are the orchestra; you are the band that plays the music. But lately, I have not been able to find many people who want to play in this band. They want to play music but not with anyone else; or, they want to be a solo act and worship alone or only with a few other people. Yet, I am here to listen, to serve, to shepherd all of you - and, to bring you together. I am here to listen to the many sounds of each family and the music you bring to our parish. I am here to save souls and build the Kingdom of God. And, we can only do that together - as one community.

I have listened for several years now, and people have indicated a desire to make our spiritual home and our educational home a better place. This building drive to restore and renovate our worship space, to build new entrances to our churches, to address the parking lot, to improve our CCD building, and our school - these are all things that you said you wanted. Will it cost money? Of course it will. None of us are blind. But, I strongly believe that while raising the funds is important, there is a larger purpose and that is to build community by having people visit, talk, speak, and share with other people. Are you going to be asked for money over the next few months? YES - but so am I. Are you required to give to this building drive? NO! Some will, some will not. Are you going to be pressured into giving? NO! The entire approach to our development effort here is that this building drive is only going to be a means, and that the greatest gift of all will be the people who come together, meet and share, visit and invite, and whatever funds we are able to generate, we will do so because we all want to build and have a better community to worship in and educate our children and grandchildren and those yet to be born.

No, I don't understand why more people do not open up their hearts and their homes and their minds and their coffee pots to new relationships, new friends, and new opportunities to see Christ through other people.

Over the next few months, we will be having many different "waves" or stages to this building drive. All of you will be invited at various times to come, to listen, to talk, to share, and to participate. In fact, this Sunday night, over a hundred parish leaders have been invited to come and share their time, their faith and their laughter and joy as we kick off one of the many stages of this Campaign. And yet, many that have been invited have not responded YES or NO. At this time, I don't know if 10 people will show up or 100 people will show up. There was an RSVP but few have chosen to respond. I don't understand. What a wonderful opportunity to come and share with people and participate in the growth of our parish. And, one of the neatest things about this reception is no one there is going to ask you for a dime! It is all built around sharing the future of the parish with each other.

And there will be many other receptions in which everyone will be invited at different times. Next month we will have a reception and in October we will have others. Maybe no one will show up but me for all these occasions, but I refuse to let go of a dream that I have for this parish -- that sooner or later in our history we are going to be able to break down some barriers, crash through some walls, and reach out to

each other as one faith community. If salvation is our final goal and our main purpose in life is to build the Kingdom of God, tell me then - what did Jesus teach us about saving souls? What did Jesus do when it came to inviting people? Did He not extend personal invitations? Did He not hold receptions and suppers? Did He not seek to build a community of people that would open up their hearts and minds? No, I will not waver; I will not give up. I believe in the powerful nature of people and in the Holy Spirit.

And, when you are invited to one of our many receptions over the next couple of months (pause) . . . I would love to see you there. And please, leave your checkbook at home.

And, if you are not part of the "wave" of people invited tonight, then you will be invited to other events in the next month or so. I hope you will accept. I hope we all will come together, and we will use this building drive as a rallying point, where 50 years from now people in this community can look back on all of this and say, "Coming together as one parish family all began at the turn of the century."

Please. Help me understand, because right now, all I am hearing is excuses on why people cannot reach out to other people, and - as a Christian and your pastor -- I don't understand why.

Please. Help me understand. My invitation is open for you to play in this orchestra with some wonderful people. We are all part of the same parish family, the same spiritual home.

NOTE: Interestingly, over 150 people showed up that evening, the building drive was hugely successful, but the most important aspect of that whole effort was that over 70% of the parish families participated, and the influx of new people into the ministries of the parish was the greatest accomplishments. Sometimes, you just have to stick your neck out.

ISPD SUCCESS STORY: Vermilion Catholic High School - Abbeville, LA

As a *Blue Ribbon School of Excellence*, Vermilion Catholic High School in Abbeville, LA (Diocese of Lafayette, LA), had witnessed great success. However, when Fr. William Blanda, pastor of St. Mary Magdalen Parish arrived in 2002 as the new administrator, he recognized that the school needed three key elements in order to maintain academic excellence:

1. Leadership Changes -- *School Principal*
2. Long-Range Strategic Plan
3. Restructuring of the Development Office

Thus, in partnership with ISPD, the Long-Range Strategic Plan (LRSP) was created, which involved hundreds of people in Input Sessions, planning sessions and the Convocation. The sheer force of people fuel and their enthusiasm propelled Vermilion Catholic to one of the most exciting and productive academic years in the school's history. Faculty and staff were truly energized with new possibilities, parents were meaningfully engaged in the life of the school and student activities were thriving.

The results of the LRSP process remain truly remarkable -- most notable the emergence of an attitude of quality and continuous improvement. A new Director of Development is in place and is currently managing the implementation of the Long-Range Strategic Plan with many new people involved. Also, the completion of the

school's first Capital Campaign is on the horizon, which promises to exceed its goal and a newly expanded, people-driven Annual Fund Drive will be executed next Fall.

Quality leadership, a dynamic vision and a commitment to the *"meaningful involvement and engagement of people"* -- the keys to success in Catholic development. At Vermilion Catholic High School, the future is bright, with a flourishing Development effort being the cornerstone.

ISPD AND NCEA GET READY FOR 2006 CONVENTION

In partnership with Sister Mary Tracy from NCEA, ISPD will host a luncheon in New Orleans in early June for surrounding pastors, principals, presidents, and development directors. Over 25 people have been invited, and the purpose will be to brainstorm development topics and speakers for the 2006 NCEA Convention which will be held right here in New Orleans next spring.

If you have any thoughts about worthwhile topics or excellent speakers that you would like to see and hear at the Convention, please e-mail Frank Donaldson, ISPD president, at ispd@aol.com. We will plan to submit your suggestions and ideas at the luncheon. We look forward to hearing from you.

UPCOMING 2005 WORKSHOPS

Dynamic presenters share proven strategies and discuss development issues during one and two day seminars for Catholic parishes and schools. These workshops are conveniently held across the country at an affordable price of \$49-\$99 We hope you'll join us soon!

Topics Include: ** Attracting New Students ** Total Stewardship ** Long-Range Planning ** Annual Funds & Capital Campaigns ** Charge Up Your Development Battery! ** Building A Stronger Image for Your Catholic School ** Involving More People in Your Catholic Institution **

Scheduled Locations: ** Brooklyn, NY ** Cleveland, OH ** Denver, CO ** Dubuque, IA ** Erlanger, KY ** Harrisburg, PA ** Hartford, CT ** Lacrosse, WI ** Lake Charles, LA ** Miami, FL ** Newark, NJ ** Omaha, NE ** Philadelphia, PA ** Pittsburgh, PA ** San Francisco, CA **

- [Check Here for Details](#)

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