



June 2008

Development Directions

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

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"HAPPY 20th ANNIVERSARY to ISPD!"

By Frank Donaldson, President

All of us come to this ministry of Catholic Development from many different angles and walks of life. I have known some who have come from backgrounds as anthropologists and psychologists; some who decided that they wanted to leave the classroom; some who felt that their marketing and public relations experience was enough to get them launched; some who were introduced and encouraged by someone else to take on this Catholic development challenge; and, some who simply thought that this was God's calling - regardless of their background.

The stories and the reasons are always fascinating, and those who stick with this ministry over the years come to realize that there is a calling, there is a reason why Catholic development professionals view this as their passion.

As the 1986-87 school year began, I took a job as an English and Journalism teacher at Mercy Academy in New Orleans, LA. Four months earlier, I had lost my son Dustin, who died of an infectious disease; he was five years old when he passed away.

Sister Mary Ann Hardcastle, RSM was the principal at Mercy Academy. I knew little of the Mercy Sisters and their mission and charism, but deep down I realized that I came to that high school in uptown New Orleans as a man who was searching - trying to find some answers for a son whose life was snatched away. It wasn't long into the school year when I found myself in Sister Mary Ann's office with a resignation letter in hand. I told her I simply could not continue; the burden was too heavy. She looked at me, and with the utmost of compassion, said, "Frank, take however long you need - a day, a week, a month, it does not matter. I really believe your position is here at this time in your life; you were born to serve. What else can I do to help carry your burden?"

With great hesitation, I said, "I am broke. I have no vehicle; I walk to school and back home, and by the time I pay everyone I owe at the end of the month, there is nothing. My son's death seems to have closed the doors on whatever ambitions I once had."

"No, I can assure you," Sister Mary Ann said, "whenever God closes a door, He always opens a

window. It is so much better to light a candle than to curse the darkness you are in. I have no doubt that you will be able to take this energy that you now have and channel it into something that will be so positive, so giving, that you will not believe the new doors that will be opened. You must believe that. It may take weeks or months or even a few years, but you have gifts to share with many - just let the Lord guide you. I will help in whatever way I can."

The months moved on during that 1986-87 school year. A relative of Sister Mary Ann's bought me a brand new van, and gave me five years to pay it off, with no interest. Another friend of hers sat down with me and helped me financially get my life in order and get back into the black, and that was accomplished within twelve months. However, the greatest gift that Sister Mary Ann offered was at the end of my first year at Mercy Academy, she asked if I would take on the position of Development Director. My background in communications, public relations and marketing with the 1984 World's Fair, fund-raising with a musical group I directed called CELEBRATION!, and my 20+ years of being in front of an "audience" as a teacher would serve me well.

As the 1987-88 school year began, I found myself as the school's development director - in charge of public relations and marketing, Annual Fund, fund-raising events, school newsletters, news releases, alumnae outreach and reunions, planned giving, database management, strategic planning, and the list goes on. I loved it! There was never a better fit for where I was in my life. Sister Mary Ann was right; the energy I had that was all caught up inside of me now had the channels wide open for release.

We had a lot of success that first year, and in the Fall of 1988, several schools and parishes, and the Baton Rouge Diocese invited me to move into the world of consulting. Realizing this could be a conflict of interest, I went to Sister Mary Ann and asked her permission. She not only said yes, but strongly encouraged these new opportunities. As she said, "Frank, I am not worried about you. You live five blocks from school; you work on the weekend; you don't go home until 9 PM at night; you will do whatever you need to do to make sure Mercy Academy's development efforts continue to surge."

It wasn't long after that, on a part time basis, in June of 1988, I began the company that came to be known as ISPD - the Institute of School and Parish Development. In 1991, I went full time and never looked back.

June 2008 marks the start of our 20th year. Milestones like this allow a person to sit back and remember the early days and where this started. Sister Mary Ann was the catalyst to all of this. She was the one who saw something in me that I never recognized; she was the one who encouraged me, nurtured me, and lifted me up when I was down. The death of my son was also the birth of this ministry. God did open that window. Today, I do understand the mission of the Mercy Sisters. Thank you, Sister Mary Ann. Happy 20th Anniversary, ISPD!

Lessons Learned in Catholic Development

Over the many years I have been involved in Catholic Parish and School Development, there have been a lot of lessons that have been learned. This pencil mark on the door frame of our history allows me to the opportunity to share some of these lessons.

- People really do want to become involved in the life of our Catholic institutions, but they do need the personal invitation before they take that first step.
- Raising money is not the "end" result of a Catholic Development effort; it is simply a step in the process of building that strong connection between the "steward" who shares the gifts and that Catholic institution.
- The people engagement efforts of a parish and/or a school cannot be a "smokescreen" for

money. Eventually, most people will see right through it.

- The two greatest challenges we face in Catholic Development are:
 1. Opening up the roadways, avenues and vehicles to invite and involve people
 2. Constantly educating our boards, councils, staff, faculty, and Catholic institution leaders on what development is really all about. Most do not understand.
- Development efforts should not be judged solely on the amount of money raised but on the amount of meaningfully engaged people there are in the life of your Catholic school or parish. And, this amount of people should grow by 10-15% every year.
- A Catholic institution will generate as many resources as it deserves to generate, and what it deserves to generate will be in direct relationship to the quality of its people, programs, processes, planning and leadership.
- Most Catholic Development efforts succeed because two major elements are always present:
 1. Outstanding leadership that is effective and engaged
 2. Attitudes that are always positive and affirming
- Development is like a vegetable or fruit garden. Great care and concern need to be taken in selecting and planting the seeds of what you wish to grow. The ground must be tilled and cultivated and fertilized and prepared for planting. Constant attention needs to be paid in making sure those seeds grow into plants and that they are watered and nourished and not allowed to be taken over by weeds. Each fruit or vegetable has a great deal to offer to the other ones on the vine if allowed to grow properly. When harvest time is here, whatever gifts that plant has to offer should be seen as only a step in the process of a long term relationship where that plant's seeds can be used over and over again to bring more gifts for the future.
- The word "gift" can mean many things in Catholic Development. Granted, it can mean money, but there are many who are willing to share Gifts of Prayer, Involvement, Expertise, Wisdom, Resources, Time and Talent. Money is one of many gifts, not the only one.
- A Development Core Team of 15-18 people who work closely with the development officer (s) will greatly advance the Catholic Development efforts of any institution.

ISPD 15 MIN Educational DVDs on Catholic Development Free upon Request

**Just released - "An Introduction to ISPD's Total Stewardship Process" DVD
Now available for Catholic Parishes**

Beginning in April, ISPD will introduce a new educational DVD each month on Catholic Development topics.

- ***An Introduction to Long-Range Planning for Catholic Parishes***
(available now)
- ***An Introduction to Long-Range, Strategic Planning for Catholic Schools***
(available now)
- ***An Introduction to ISPD's Total Stewardship Process***
(available now)

- **Creating the Strategic Plan for Development for Parishes and Schools**
(coming August 2008)
- **Inviting, Involving, and Engaging More People into the Life of Your Catholic Parish**
(coming September 2008)
- **Getting Ready for a Capital Campaign, Part I**
(coming October 2008)
- **Implementing a Capital Campaign, Part II**
(coming November 2008)

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 now offers 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 6,500 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!](#)

FALL 2008 WORKSHOPS

Online registration will open in July

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 \$75-\$99.

We hope you'll join us!

Topics Include:

** Annual Funds **

- ** Become a More Welcoming, Engaging & Affirming Catholic Parish **
- ** Best First Steps to Take in Beginning Your Catholic Development Efforts **
- ** Capital Campaigns That Produce Results **
- ** Catholic School Enrollment Solutions **
- ** Customer Service in Your Catholic School **
- ** Long Range Planning **
- ** Total Stewardship **

Locations Include:

Arlington, VA - Atlanta - Baton Rouge - Chicago - Dallas/Fort Worth - Dayton, OH
Denver - Minneapolis/St Paul - Nashville - New Orleans - New York City - Orlando
Philadelphia - Pittsburgh - San Francisco

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

www.ISPD.com



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.

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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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