



September 2007

Development Directions

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

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INVITING THE "GIFTS"

By Frank Donaldson, President

Ever since the early days of ISPD, we have always stood behind the following statement: *"The greatest challenge that Catholic institutions face today is not raising money. The greatest challenge we face is creating the roadways, avenues and vehicles to invite, involve and engage people into the life of that Catholic parish and/or school."* When we make that statement in our workshops and consulting experiences, it is usually met with some disbelief, and from the very beginning of this company we have always known that getting Catholic leaders to "buy into" that way of thinking was going to be difficult.

At many of our workshops throughout the country, we will begin by asking attendees to state what they would like to get out of that one or two day experience. Not knowing what the workshop is going to emphasize, 75% of the people usually say something like this:

- "We came here so you could show us how to raise \$1,000,000."
- "We need to find out how to raise more money because we simply cannot balance our budget."
- "We're hoping you will show us how to 'tap' into those alums who don't give us anything."
- "We really need to increase our offertory collections by 10%, and we hope that we'll learn how."

As I said, true Catholic Development is a tough sell. However, after eighteen years of working with many outstanding Catholic leaders (pastors, presidents, principals, development officers, board members, parish council members, etc.) many are aware that the underlying theme that makes this work all boils down to inviting, involving and engaging people.

In this issue, let's use the example of the capital campaign. Now here is a process that many Catholic institutions have been involved with or are planning to move forward with in the near future. Here at ISPD we have managed over 100 capital campaigns since 1989, so please allow me to use some of these experiences in explaining the message in this month's newsletter.

When 99% of people hear the words "capital campaign" one thought comes to mind: raise major money to build, renovate, restore, relocate, or even retire debt or enhance an endowment fund. The total focus is on generating revenue, and whether you are a Catholic parish or school, one of the major priorities will be to invite as many folks as possible to participate. Many Catholic institutions will recruit parishioners, parents, alums, etc. who have experience in raising money to be their leaders of the campaign, and they will approach the campaign with many divisions and many strategies. Those who have been at it a long time will have all kinds of "tricks of the trade" in getting people to give money, and some of those methods may not be the best in building a stronger faith community.

So with the above in mind, here is the question: Why does a capital campaign (or an annual fund for that matter) have to be only about raising money? I know that sounds crazy, but shouldn't a capital campaign that is going to reach out to everyone the parish and/or the school knows invite more gifts than just money? Shouldn't this also be a time to build relationships, engage people, invite people to share other gifts -- especially if money is not something they are capable to sharing at that particular time? If, as Catholic leaders, we are to be about building the Body of Christ, then why do we think that we can only build something with dollars? We can also build the Body of Christ and strengthen our Faith Community by using the capital campaign as a vehicle to invite Gifts of Prayer, Gifts of Involvement (time, talent, expertise, wisdom) and Gifts of Financial Participation).

What about that alum who has very little financial means? Why do we think that we need to ask her/him for \$5 for every year since graduation? Wouldn't we want that alum to give a Gift of Involvement and help organize an out of town class reunion? Or, have that alum give a Gift of Prayer by praying the Campaign Prayer each day? And, the same holds true for our parents and for our parishioners and for those in leadership positions in our parishes and schools. It doesn't always have to be about the money. Invite the Gifts -- all of them and encourage that family/person to pray and discern what they are able to share with your Catholic parish and/or school.

Why not use a Letter of Intent instead of pledge card for money? Why not list *Gifts of Prayer* and have different prayer opportunities available for that person/family to check? Why not have *Gifts of Involvement* and have a list of involvement opportunities for that person/family to look at? And, obviously, please do have *Gifts of Financial Participation* with different options and packages and ways and means.

Through the years, most of the campaigns we have run and managed have been successful, and I strongly believe they have been because they were about more than just the money. These campaigns sought to evangelize; they encouraged people to become more involved in the life of that parish and/or school, and above all they built stronger relationships because at every possible moment, the invitations were done "eyeball to eyeball." And, those invitations were more than just "money talk."

So, we are suggesting to "Open Wide the Doors to Christ," as one campaign had as their theme, and invite people to share their many gifts. Once we put the gifts of Prayer, Involvement and Financial Participation on an equal playing field, more people

will be receptive, more people will find ways to share their gifts (even if money is not one of them at this time), and more people will come to realize that it takes all kinds of gifts and all kinds of people to build God's Kingdom in our Catholic institutions.

THE LETTER OF INTENT

Shown here is a sample Letter of Intent that we believe in. Each one is different, but you can get the main idea of what we are talking about as we reach out and invite all.

- [Sample Letter of Intent](#)

UPCOMING FALL 2007 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 \$69-\$250 .

We hope you'll join us soon!

Topics Include:

- ** 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 - One and Two Day Seminars **
 - ** Customer Service in Your Catholic School **
 - ** Long Range Planning **

Scheduled Locations:

Austin, TX ** Birmingham, AL ** Cincinnati, OH
Cleveland, OH ** Houston, TX ** Lafayette, LA
Milwaukee, WI ** Orlando, FL ** Philadelphia, PA
South Bend, IN ** Toledo, OH

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.

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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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