



PASTOR'S SAMPLE LETTERS



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PASTOR CAMPAIGN LETTERS

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SPECIAL EDITION NEWSLETTER COVER MEMO (SAMPLE)

Note: This letter accompanies the mailing of the Special Edition Newsletter

Dear Friend in Christ,

I am so excited about sending you the enclosed newsletter. This newsletter formally launches one of the biggest steps our parish has ever undertaken to enlarge our ability to reach people on behalf of Christ and the Gospel and expand our ministries. The name of this effort: **(Campaign Title)**

In this newsletter you will find the following:

- ☐ Information Introducing our **(Campaign Title)** capital stewardship campaign
- ☐ Information about our **(describe the capital project)**
- ☐ Our Schedule of Events **(Events you will want to be a part of!)**
- ☐ The Names of the Leaders of our campaign

One of these days we will reap the benefits of what we are doing now. Until then, let me encourage you to read this newsletter and all the subsequent pieces of information that will come your way. Ask God to lead you in these critically important days in our parish. Attend our masses and celebrations and be a part of every event of our **(insert theme of campaign)** campaign. Be ready to take one of the most exciting steps of faith in your life.

Together we can touch lives here...now...and for generations to come!

Yours in Christ,

(Name)

Pastor



FACT SHEET LETTER (SAMPLE)

Note: This letter is part of your parish's Fact Sheet. The Fact Sheet begins to lay out the specifics of your case or goals (benefiting who, why, what, how much, when, where)

Dear Friends:

In this newsletter we have outlined a plan: a plan that will meet the needs of our parish and its growing ministries and a plan that will require the participation of every parishioner. A plan that depends on each of us seeking and responding to God's will in our lives. Our plan: **(Campaign Title)**. It is a campaign and a ministry that affords all of us the opportunity to serve the Lord and to respond to His blessings.

Indeed, God has blessed each of us, but in different ways. We recognize that every parishioner cannot and should not participate in the same way and give the same dollar amount. Our theme: "Not Equal Gifts, but Equal Sacrifice", embodies the teaching of proportionate giving. It is our prayer that commitments will be made that reflect individual blessings of God and exemplify genuine sacrifice.

The **(Campaign Title)** campaign is too large for any one of us. It is too large for all of us put together. No campaign, however, is too big for God. Our challenge is that each of us, through prayer, will understand God's will for our lives. I ask that you begin praying right now, "Lord, what do You want to do through me – to accomplish Your will – for my parish and the Church of **(Diocese/Archdiocese Name)**?" Once we have come to know God's plan for our participation, our challenge will be to do God's will with faith and a dedication that is pleasing in Him.

We are honored and grateful by the way God has blessed our parish. We can truly say that in our lives and in our parish, "God is with us!" And we are even more excited about the great things He plans to do in the years to come.

Yours in Christ,

(Name)

Pastor



PASTOR'S BROCHURE LETTER (SAMPLE)

Note: The parish brochure should capture the vision and mission of the parish's capital campaign. A letter, like the sample below, could be included in the brochure.

Dear Friend in Christ,

Throughout history, God has given His people a vision. It is my belief that God has given our parish a vision that inspires us to make a positive impact on others in the name of Jesus Christ.

With vision comes opportunity. I believe our door of opportunity is our **(Campaign Title)** capital stewardship campaign. Through this opportunity we have the ability to secure the ministry of our parish for generations to come. This brochure introduces you to the vision of our parish and door of opportunity to which God invites us to enter.

Please take the time to study this brochure. As you do, begin to pray, "Lord, what do You want to do through me – to accomplish Your will – for my parish and the Church of **(Diocese/Archdiocese Name)**?" Pray that God will give you clarity about His will for you and your family. Pray that you will come to know how you can take advantage of this opportunity to invest yourself in something eternal here at **(Name of Parish)**. Then, in faith, follow His leadership.

May God bless us as we begin together this season of prayer and reflection. This brochure will assist you in your spiritual journey. It will be exciting to discover the great things God has in store for us as we enter a new door of great opportunity.

Yours in Christ,

Fr. _____, *Pastor*



TOWN HALL MEETING INVITATION LETTER (SAMPLE)

Note: This letter will be used only if you are using the Town Hall Meetings or Information Meetings strategies in your program.

Dear **(Name)**:

You are invited and encouraged to attend one of the Town Hall Meetings scheduled on **(Date)**. Enclosed with this letter you will find a list of the meetings with locations(s), dates and times. A member of our **(insert program name)** Team will be contacting you to confirm your attendance at one of the meetings.

Your attendance is very important. These Town Hall Meetings are designed to share information about our **(insert scope of project)** called **(Campaign Title)**. Information about our parish's present and future ministry will be provided. We will share why this program is so important and why your support is critical to our success. No financial commitment will be asked for or received at these meetings. However, the parish will be called to prayer.

I hope you will attend one of these Town Hall Meetings as a demonstration of your support and as an encouragement to others. When called, please be ready to answer affirmatively.

I am counting on you.

Yours in Christ,

Fr. _____, *Pastor*



PASTOR'S LETTER FOR RECEIVING SACRIFICE STORIES

Date _____

Dear _____:

You have given of yourself in so many important ways. You have proven to be a leader in the support of the ministry at (Name of Parish). This is why, at this critical time in the life of our parish, I am asking you and other key leaders to help me.

You are surely aware of the importance of the (Name of Campaign) campaign. The future of our parish will be significantly affected by the results of this effort. I am asking every family/person in our parish to find a time to consider God's blessings in their lives and to earnestly pray to discover God's will as it relates to the needs and opportunities of this parish.

We are asking each of you to consider *"Not Equal Gifts but Equal Sacrifice."* It is to this end that I want to ask you to help. It is hard for people to define sacrifice. We can talk about the fact that sacrifice means to give up something that is important, but until the people in our parish see that there are those who are truly willing to do this, the concept will never come to life.

This has happened in a dynamic way in other parishes that have experienced this journey. A couple in one parish put off building a new house because they concluded that they would rather be a part of building a "new house" for God. A woman in another parish shared her story: She told how she had come to the parish needy and hopeless. There had been a place for her — a place where she could hear and be blessed. She said that she wanted her commitment to be truly sacrificial because she wanted to make sure there would always be a place for someone else like her.

Real life experiences like these will help crystallize the joy and reality of sacrifice. The issue is that the examples will be far more meaningful if they come from our own parish community. I know you love this parish and you want this campaign to be successful. Will you share your story of sacrifice? Your example could make a difference.

Here is what I would ask you to do. First, bring your family together (delete if not appropriate). Pray the campaign prayer, and ask God, *"What do You want to do through me to fulfill Your will in our parish?"* Then, consider what sacrifice means to you. What could you give up, put off, or do without? How could you make your commitment a meaningful expression to God? When you have discovered what sacrifice means to you, would you write your story on the enclosed form and return it to me. Include not only what your sacrifice will be but also what process you went through to arrive at that decision.

I would like to be able to allow these stories to inspire my thoughts as I prepare for weekend homilies between _____ (Weekend II) and _____ (Weekend IV). I may even want to publicly share some of these stories as a way to inspire others. It would be more meaningful if I could attribute the story to a particular individual or family, but you may indicate a preference for anonymity, if you wish. I am confident that stories like yours will help countless others as they seek to define this aspect of their commitment.

Thank you for being the kind of leader that would allow me to seek your help at this time. Please return your story to me by _____ (Weekend II).

Sincerely,

Fr. _____, Pastor



I would prefer that you not use my name

[illegible]



INFORMATION PACKET LETTER (SAMPLE)

Note: If your campaign uses an Information strategy in which packets are distributed, then the parish will need to send a packet to those households which were unable to attend/participate in the packet distribution. A letter like this sample accompanies that mailing.

Dear **(Name)**:

Over the last several weeks, the parish family has received information about our **(Campaign Title)** campaign. We have begun praying together for God's blessings and guidance in these important days.

It is my understanding that you have not received this important information. Those materials are enclosed with this letter. Please take the time to review each piece and if this material generates questions, do not hesitate to call **(put instructions here)**.

In this Information Packet you will find:

- ☐ The **Parish Brochure** that will detail for you the urgent needs of our parish.
- ☐ The **Diocesan Brochure** that will detail for you the urgent needs of the Church of **(Diocese/Archdiocese Name)**.
- ☐ A **Question and Answer** sheet that will provide more detailed answers to your questions.
- ☐ An **I Have a Question** sheet to ask questions and which may be submitted at Mass or to the parish office. Questions will be answered in bulletins or in sermons.
- ☐ A **Discovery... A Personal Challenge** spiritual worksheet that, with prayer and reflection, will help you discover God's plan for your giving.
- ☐ Our **(Name of Program)** campaign prayer that we will be praying daily in order to know God's will for us.
- ☐ After a time of information gathering, reflection, and prayer for God's guidance, our parish family will come together on Commitment/Special Event Weekend the weekend of **(Date)** to respond generously to His blessings through a gift to **(Campaign Title)** campaign. Please begin to pray and reflect on God's call to you, put this date, **(Commitment Weekend Date)**, on your calendar, and plan to join the entire parish family for this day of commitment and celebration.

God has great things planned for **(Name of Parish)**. These things will only come to pass through your prayer and active participation and generous giving.

Yours in Christ,



Fr. _____, *Pastor*



ADVANCE COMMITMENT LETTER OF INVITATION (SAMPLE)

Note: This letter is mailed to each person/couple invited to an Advance Commitment Gathering. Check the mailing date in your program calendar for this letter. The Campaign Administrator will need your letter at least one week prior to the mailing date.

Dear **(Name)**:

I am grateful that we have people like you in the life of **(Name of Parish)**. Every parish needs leaders, people who love to minister, people who care about the life of their parish, and people who are active and involved. You are such a person.

Our parish is at a critical crossroad. I believe the success of our **(Campaign Title)** is vital to our present and future growth and ministry. We must move forward now with our **(Project Objective)**.

Because I believe **(Campaign Title)** is so important, I have asked **(Names)**, and they have graciously consented, to host a gathering for a few key people like you.

You are invited to **(Name of Location)** at **(Address)** on **(Day, Date)** at **(Time)** for a **(Insert Menu)**, a presentation on our **(Name of Program)** campaign, and a time of fellowship with your friends. No financial commitments will be requested at this gathering; however, you will be asked to prayerfully consider making your commitment in advance of the rest of the parish family at our Commitment/Special Event Weekend on **(Date)**. A member of the Advance Commitment Team will be calling to confirm your attendance.

Thanks for all you mean to me personally and for all work on behalf of Christ and His Gospel. I need and am counting on your continued support.

I look forward to seeing you at this important event.

Yours in Christ,

Fr. _____, *Pastor*



AC INVITE AND CHILDCARE OPTION

____, 20

Dear **(Name)**:

I am deeply grateful that we have leaders like you in our parish. Every ministry of our parish is experiencing dynamic growth. God is blessing abundantly!

I believe the success of our **(Campaign Title)** capital campaign is vital to our continued growth and mission. We must {in this section list the key elements of the case} and contribute our portion to the Shared Ministries of the diocese **now** without financially encroaching on our ministries.

Because I believe **(Campaign Title)** is so important and you are so important to its success, I would like to invite you to attend a special gathering for leaders and fellow parishioners of **(name of parish)** in **(location)** on **(date)** at **(time)** PM.

This will be an opportunity to enjoy a nice meal, fellowship with other leaders and hear from me as your Pastor, a Campaign Leader and our consultant from O'Meara Ferguson, who has been working with our parish in this campaign for the past few months. You will learn more about this diocesan campaign and the opportunities it presents for the diocese and our parish. No commitments to **(Campaign Title)** will be requested on this occasion, but you will be asked to prayerfully consider making your commitment in advance of Commitment Weekend on **(date)**. A member of the Advance Commitment Team will be calling to receive your reservation.

If needed, childcare will be provided at the church. Just let **(name of person taking responses)** know in your response and it will be provided. Confirmation phone calls by a member of our Advance Commitment Team will be made starting **(date)** but your reservation by either phone or e-mail will help us in this process.

Surely, **(Campaign Title)** is a great opportunity for our parish and the **(Arch) diocese**. You are vital to our mission!

Thank you for all you mean to me personally and, most importantly, to God's work in our parish. I am counting on your continued help and support.

I will look forward to seeing you on **(date & time)** PM

Sincerely,
Pastor



EARLY COMMITMENT LETTER TO LEADERSHIP TEAM

Note: This letter may be emailed or mailed and sent to the Leadership Team members 2 weeks prior to Commitment Weekend.

Over the past six months I have been humbled and inspired by your commitment to *(name of parish)* and to make *(project description)* a reality. Your hard work, joyful spirit, and strong faith have brought us this far. This would not be possible without you.

You have sacrificed much already so I hesitate to send this email. At the same time it is important that the work God has done through us so far come to a strong finish. So I ask that you join me in turning in your commitment card to the parish office no later than *(date)*. In addition, when we have our time of commitment on *(Commitment Weekend date)* will you please fill out another card and write duplicate on it. This is yet another way you can lead. Some may be nervous and reluctant to fill out their card during Mass. Your example will be encouraging for many.

Continue to pray. As the Apostle Paul wrote, “Pray without ceasing.”

“I am confident that He who began a good work in you will bring it to completion...”
Philippians 1:6

I count it a blessing to serve you as your pastor and to call you friends.
May riches of God’s blessings be yours.

Father *(pastor’s name)*



FOLLOW-UP LETTER TO ADVANCE COMMITMENT GATHERING ATTENDEES

This letter is sent to those who attended the Advance Commitment Gathering. This should be sent very soon after the event (no more than two days) to help focus the individual before they complete the commitment card.

Dear _____:

Thank you for attending our *Advancing the Mission* Advance Commitment Gathering. Excitement continues to grow with our *Advancing the Mission* stewardship campaign. It is invigorating to see renewed commitment from our parishioners to the current and future ministries of our parish and diocese. We have many ministries that are touching the lives of our parishioners and giving the Church of Green Bay an opportunity to provide a light to others in our community. Yet there is so much more that we are called to do.

I know that with committed leadership like yours, we can reach our financial goals and see the realization of our vision.

You have been asked to be a leader in *Advancing the Mission* by making your commitment prior to Commitment Weekend on [DATES]. Your involvement will help us reach the largest possible advance commitment total which will be announced at Mass on that weekend. Your early example of sacrifice and commitment will lead the process and set the pace for the rest of the parish. Please complete your pledge form and return it to the parish office by [DATE]. You may return your pledge by mail, dropping it in the offertory at Mass, or dropping by the office in person.

As you prayerfully consider your three-year financial commitment, my own prayer is that you remember the theme of sacrifice and a willingness to give. I thank you for your faithfulness and the many sacrifices you make for our parish. Together we will continue to build and provide ministries to our parish and community.

Peace be with you,

(Pastor's Name)



FOLLOW-UP LETTER FOR ADVANCE COMMITMENT GATHERING ABSENTEES

This is a letter for those invited but could not be in attendance at the Advance Commitment Gathering. The fifth paragraph may be used to suggest or direct a specific \$ range or amount.

Dear _____:

You were missed at our *Advancing the Mission* Advance Commitment Gathering. I am sorry you were unable to attend. With committed leadership like yours and others, we can reach our financial goals and see the realization of our vision.

As you continue the prayer process to make your decision concerning your own sacrificial commitment, please know that I am praying for you. I encourage you to pray that your commitment will be a faith-enriching challenge. Remember, your pledge commitment will be for three years.

At the Advance Commitment Gathering, those present were asked to return their commitment to the parish office before the parish Commitment Weekend. Your involvement will help us reach the largest possible advance commitment total, which will be announced on Commitment Weekend, [DATE]. The example of sacrifice and commitment through these advance commitments will lead and set the pace for the rest of our parish. Please return the enclosed confidential commitment card to the parish office by [DATE]. You may return your pledge by mail, dropping it in the offertory at Mass, or dropping by the office in person.

On Commitment Weekend, each family will be asked to register their commitment. Even though you will have already made your commitment, you will want to show your support by participating. How? First, your attendance at Mass will be an expression of your leadership. Second, during the time of commitment, you can participate by turning in a blank card or another completed card marked "duplicate."

Enclosed is a "gift profile" that our stewardship consultant says is representative of the gifts necessary to reach our capital financial goals. I have no idea what you may be considering for your commitment, but it is my hope you will be prayerfully considering your gift. Remember, your capital commitment will be given over a three year period.

Whatever your commitment to *Advancing the Mission*, I thank you for your faithfulness and the sacrifices you make for our parish. Together we will continue to provide ministries to our parish and community as our Lord Jesus Christ has called us to do.

Peace be with you,

(Pastor's Name)



COMMITMENT CARD LETTER – MAILED FOLLOWING COMMITMENT WEEKEND TO THOSE WHO HAVE NOT YET PLEDGED

Include a commitment card and return envelope

Dear **(Name)**,

(Campaign Title) is so important to our ministry that we need everyone to participate!

Our lives have been deeply touched by the ministries of **(Name of Parish)**. Now God wants to use this parish and to use us to bless others. **(Campaign Title)** looks to further the growth, vitality and ministries of our parish now and for years to come.

Enclosed is your response card on which you can indicate your financial commitment for the **(Campaign Title)** campaign. Your commitment over the next three years will provide the resources that allow us to take a giant step forward in the life of our parish and our ministries. We pray that you will make your commitment prayerfully. Your commitment, along with the commitments of all our parish family, will shape our community for decades to come.

Our response process began with Commitment Weekend on the weekend of **(date)**. Over the next three weeks we will continue to take pledges at Masses and the parish office. Please bring your commitment card to one of those Masses or to the parish office by **(date)**. We will close our **(Campaign Title)** campaign on Announcement Weekend, **(date)**.

Jesus Christ gathered us as a people to continue His mission of sharing the Gospel, gathering God's people, and continuing His ministry until He comes again. The more parishioners that participate in **(Campaign Title)**, the stronger will be our parish and the more successful will be our **(Campaign Title)**. It is true in life and it is true in faith: We are stronger together than we are as individual. Together we can do great things for God.

May God be glorified and the community of Christ here at **(Name of Parish)** be strengthened through our campaign and our generous participation!

Yours in Christ,

Fr. _____, Pastor



THANK YOU LETTER (SAMPLE)

Note: This letter may be sent out after the Announcement Weekend to give people a sense of the participation and gifts received and to keep enthusiasm for the campaign alive.

Dear **(Name)**:

I have some exciting news to share with you. During the last few months, we have received a total of \$ _____ in our **(Campaign Title)** campaign. It is because of people like you that this has happened. Thank you for your faithfulness.

I count it a privilege to be your pastor. If I can ever be of help to you and your family, please let me know.

May our gracious Lord richly bless you.

Yours and His,

Pastor



CONFIRMATION LETTER/GIFT ACKNOWLEDGEMENT (SAMPLE)

Note: The thank you letters should be mailed the week after Celebration Weekend to all who returned a commitment card.

Dear _____,

Thank you for your generous gift and commitment to the **(Campaign Title)** campaign.

God has blessed us with His love and our saving faith in Jesus Christ, and He has equipped us to continue the mission of sharing Jesus Christ and His Gospel with a broken and needy world. Your gift will strengthen **(Name of Parish)** and the Church of **(Diocesan/Archdiocesan Name)** in that work for years to come.

I always take comfort in those words of Jesus to His willing collaborators, "I call you friends." We can take great comfort in being collaborators and friends of Jesus.

The terms of your gift are listed below. If these do not agree with your records or your intent, please contact the parish office. You will be receiving payment reminders according to the schedule you indicated on your pledge card, unless you advise us otherwise.

I want to take this opportunity, now, to express my heartfelt appreciation for your generous gift.

Yours in Christ,
(Name)

Pastor

Commitment: \$

Paid to date: \$

Balance: \$

Terms:
(Date)



QUARTERLY FOLLOW-UP LETTER TO THOSE NOT PLEDGING (SAMPLE)

Note: This letter may be modified and sent out once a quarter for a year, and then once a year after that.

Dear **(Name)**,

For the last several months our parish family has been on a spiritual journey called **(Campaign Title)**. God has some great things in store for our parish and the Church of **(Name of Diocese/Archdiocese)**. It is only through our talents and resources, generously given back to Him, that these dreams become reality.

As you will recall with me, our parish goals are to:

- ☐ Project – (\$ dollars)
- ☐ Project – (\$ dollars)
- ☐ Project – (\$ dollars)

I am happy to report that **(number)** parishioners and families have stepped forward with prayers, service and financial commitment for our **(Campaign Title)** campaign. I also know that the Lord Jesus seeks to “draw all people to Himself” and His mission. To be fully successful, then, we need everyone’s participation.

I am contacting you because

- ☐ You may have been unable thus far to participate with us in **(Campaign Title)** or
- ☐ You may have joined **(Name of Parish)** after the initial launch of campaign.

Enclosed is the **(Campaign Title)** parish brochure, Question and Answer sheet, and pledge card/envelope. If you need any more information, you may contact me or **(Campaign Leaders’ Names)**, for more information.

I am asking you to participate in **(Campaign Title)** by praying, “Lord, what do you want to do, through me, for my parish and the Church of **(Name of Diocese/Archdiocese)**?” Let Him guide you as you prayerfully consider your participation in this effort and your gift to Him.

God bless you in your prayer and discernment,

Pastor

P.S. Please pray, complete your pledge card and return it in the Sunday collection or to the parish office as soon as possible.



RE-COMMITMENT LETTER TO ONE-TIME DONORS (SAMPLE)

Note: This letter may be sent out to the one-time donors each year around the anniversary of your commitment weekend.

Dear **(Name)**,

I hope that this last year has been one filled with love, grace and blessing for you. It is a time for us to be grateful to our good and loving for Father for all His blessings, small and large.

The **(Campaign Title)** Committee and I are grateful for the commitment of all our parishioners who are joining us in achieving our parish and diocesan vision of strengthening our parish and diocese for years to come. Without your support and sacrifice this successful effort would not have been imaginable.

We are grateful for the gift that you made to **(Campaign Title)** last year. We know well that there are many reasons why a person cannot pledge for more than one year at a time. Knowing that some people can only commit on a year-to-year basis, I would like to ask you to prayerfully consider making another gift of the same amount to **(Campaign Title)** this year.

Enclosed you will find a card and envelope. If God has moved you, please complete the card, make out your check to **(Campaign Title)** and renew your commitment to this wonderful vision. Your gift may be returned in the collection at a weekend mass or to the parish office.

Again, I thank you for your prayer sacrifice. It's only by our deep faith and by working and giving together that we can do such great things for the Lord.

May God's choicest blessings be yours,

Fr. Smith

P.S. Please complete the pledge card and your check, enclose it in the envelope and drop it in the collection at Mass.



SPEAKING TIPS & SAMPLE HOMILIES



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SPEAKING TIPS FOR PASTORS

Beginning with the invitation of parish leaders to the Orientation Meeting, the enlistment of key people to serve on the Leadership Team and continuing throughout the entirety of the program, Pastors/Parish Directors have the opportunity to influence the perspective their parishioners have of the **(Title of Campaign) Campaign**. **By the way they speak they can greatly enhance or harm the success of the campaign in their parish.** This will take place as they communicate the purposes of and opportunities present in the campaign. In order to help provide for the best experience for parishioners and the most generous financial results, it is important that the Pastor/Parish Director always speaks in terms which stress the benefits that can come to individuals, the parish, and the **(Archdiocese/ Diocese)**.

- ☐ **RECOGNIZE THE IMPORTANCE OF THE CAMPAIGN.** In a capital stewardship campaign such as this, you have the opportunity to raise much more money than in a traditional parish fundraiser. At the same time, you teach your people the scriptural principles of stewardship, which can positively influence their giving habits for the rest of their lives.
- ☐ **TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THE “TEACHING MOMENT.”** A capital stewardship campaign provides you with a natural opportunity to teach the scriptural principles concerning stewardship. During all phases of the campaign, especially in training meetings and the Inspiration Phase homilies, take advantage of your people’s expectancy and capitalize on the “teaching moment” you have been provided.
- ☐ **BE POSITIVE AND ENTHUSIASTIC ABOUT YOUR PARISH’S CAPITAL PROJECT AND THE (Archdiocese/Diocese)’s (Campaign Title).** In every campaign some resistance usually emerges. Most often it is from people who do not want to give and are searching for reasons not to participate. Don’t get drawn into their negativity. You do not have to agree with them just to be polite. Rather, overcome their negativity by speaking enthusiastically about the opportunity everyone has to join with others in the mission of the broader Church and to join with their fellow parishioners in positioning their parish for the future.
- ☐ **DON’T CONSIDER THAT YOU ARE ASKING PEOPLE FOR MONEY.** Approach the campaign with the attitude that you are *giving your parishioners an opportunity to invest in what God is doing*. You are not trying to get something from them; you are inviting them to attempt something great for God. You are asking them to do what God expects and what He has already equipped them to do. You never have to apologize for calling parishioners to greater commitment as disciples of Jesus Christ. Consider this to be an opportunity to promote stewardship as an essential component of Christian discipleship.
- ☐ **DON’T TALK PEOPLE OUT OF THEIR OPPORTUNITY TO GIVE TO GOD’S WORK.** Never say, “*Now you probably don’t have much to give,*” or “*I know that you can’t give very much,*” or “*I know that this isn’t a good time for you to give.*” Usually a Pastor/Parish Director says such things because he wants to protect his parishioners, not because he wants them to do what God expects. People will contribute as little as possible if we give them permission. Always encourage them to be faithful with whatever resources, great or small, the Lord has entrusted to them. Encourage them to be generous in the same way that God has been generous to them.



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- **PRACTICE THE PROMISE OF JESUS, WHO ASSURES US: “Ask and it will be given to you.”**
(Matthew 7:7)

ADVANCE COMMITMENT TALKING POINTS

FOR

PASTOR PRESENTATION

“...From everyone who has been given much, much will be demanded; and from the one who has been entrusted with much, much more will be asked.” (Luke 12:48)

The Advance Commitment Gatherings are critical to the financial success of your campaign. Potentially, half of the money that will be raised in this campaign will come as a result of these gatherings. For this reason, it is extremely important that the presentations made by the Pastor and Consultant at these gatherings be as effective as possible. The following suggestions should help you to plan your part of that program.

PROGRAM DIVISIONS: The presentation will be separated into: opening prayer, Video (if available), Pastor’s presentation of parish case, Q&A, Consultant’s explanation of process and different ways to give, Pastor’s challenge, and closing prayer. Each division will attempt to answer the following:

1. **PASTOR’S PRESENTATION OF THE CASE - WHY IS THIS PROJECT AND CAMPAIGN NEEDED?** Pastor (7 minutes)

It is very important that the capital stewardship campaign be placed effectively within its context. The necessity of the project must be explained in order to justify the need for the people to give. Your presentation should include:

- a. A word of appreciation to the hosts.
- b. An acknowledgment to all attending and an explanation of why they were invited. Every effort needs leaders. They are being asked to be leaders in this effort.
- c. A description of the case and projects needing to be funded and why it is so necessary for the parish to do it. **Talk in terms of how each project will affect people and their lives.**
- d. An introduction of the Consultant, why you have asked them to share and an endorsement of what they have been doing for the parish.

2. **HOW DO YOU DETERMINE YOUR COMMITMENT?** Consultant (20 minutes)

The Consultant will explain how the money is to be raised, the various ways in which each person may give, the advantages to them and the parish in giving “gifts in kind,” how they



are to complete the commitment card, why we are asking them to respond earlier than others, when the card is to be turned in, and how. When finished, the Consultant will return the presentation to the Pastor for the closing appeal.

NOTE: *The Pastor should study the way the Consultant uses the commitment card and “Gift Profile” at the gatherings, for you will be the one doing this at the Special Event.*

3. **WHY I NEED YOUR HELP.** Pastor (2 minutes)

A closing appeal from the Pastor is vitally important. It is imperative that you utilize your position and authority to request their participation. The attendees are more likely to respond when you ask them to do so. You will probably want to:

- a. State how critical this opportunity is for the parish.
- b. Explain your expectations of those attending.
- c. Identify that you have already made your commitment to the campaign. (You may want to refer to the Lay Witness Talks ideas in the appendices) Share with them the process that you have gone through to discern your commitment. Let them know of any struggles that you have had. Share with them that you are inviting them to join with you in supporting the campaign. Share with them your thoughts on:
 - *What “sacrifice” means to you*
 - *What you are willing to do in order to stretch to make this happen*
 - *How much that will allow you to give.*
- d. Announce the results of the Pacesetters, the first givers, and their total amount to date. Make sure they know that this is a preliminary figure and that it, too, shall grow.
- e. Challenge them to join you in making a sacrificial financial commitment.
- f. Ask them specifically to respond by the appointed date.
- g. Thank them for being the kind of persons that you and the parish could count on and for the exemplary commitment that you know they will make.
- h. Close with prayer.

IMPORTANT CONSIDERATIONS:



1. Be positive and enthusiastic about the capital project and funding campaign. By this time in a campaign, opposition to both has often surfaced. Usually, it is from people who are resisting giving and are looking for reasons to refuse. Some of these people will be at the gatherings. The atmosphere and excitement generated at these occasions can make a difference in what they decide. Let's give to them every opportunity and the best setting to change their minds.
2. Do not consider that you are asking them for money. Approach this moment with the attitude that you are giving to them an opportunity to invest in what God is doing. We are not trying to get something from them; we are giving something to them. People want to feel that their gift will make a difference somehow. Show them how it will.
3. Don't talk people out of their obligation to give to God's work. Never say, *"Now you probably don't have much to give,"* or *"I know that you can't give very much,"* or *"I know this isn't a good time for you to give."* Usually, a Pastor says such because he wants to protect the people, not because he wants them to give. People will contribute as little as possible if we give them permission or provide them a way out. Always encourage them to be as generous as possible.
4. Talk in terms of the largest dollar amounts possible. We must help people to move from "business as usual" to thinking in terms beyond anything ever considered before. Speak only about the amounts in the top tier of your "Gift Profile."
5. Be specific in your request. Say: "I need for someone in this room to give \$100,000. I need for at least two of you to give \$50,000." Tell them exactly what you want, and then expect it!
6. Remember: "Ask, and it will be given to you . . ." (Matthew 7:7)

CONCLUSION: Please accept the gratitude of your parish and campaign Leadership Team for graciously providing your home and hospitality to us during their special time. Your generosity will make a significant contribution toward our success!



LAY WITNESS TALKS

“Always be ready to give an explanation to anyone who asks you for a reason for your hope”.

(I Peter 3:15b, NAB)

PURPOSE — Every person in the parish will be challenged to make a prayerful, spiritual, generous financial commitment to the campaign. Most people must be shown how and be encouraged to do so. People who give “over and above” provide the best teaching and inspirational tool for leading others to do the same. A stewardship talk will transfer the method, message, and motivation to prayerfully consider a gift from one who is doing it to those who need an example.

INTENT — There are several ways in which your testimonial on prayerful, generous giving will help others:

- It will help them to know how to determine their prayerful, generous financial commitment. Many people have never faced this kind of decision before and need to be shown how to work through this difficult process. The example of one who has done it provides a positive pattern for others being asked to do the same.
- It will allow them to accept this as a difficult process. Voice your feelings and let others know that this was not an easy decision for you and your family. Give them permission to struggle, but also identify how it feels once you get to the other side of the decision.
- It will assist them to realize how important it is for all to commit sacrificially. Express how significant this time is for the parish and how seriously you and your family have taken this opportunity. Help them to think big. Challenge them by example to do more than they have ever done before. Set the step and stride, path and pace for all to follow.

PROCEDURE — There are three steps that one should take in determining a “prayerful, generous” financial commitment. These stages will provide the framework for your talk:

- *What does “sacrifice” mean to me?* The theme is **“Not equal gifts but equal sacrifice.”** Equal sacrifice is being asked of everyone. But what does “sacrifice” mean? How does it apply? Explain what that concept means to you and your family. Use it as the ambition underlying your commitment and try to help others think through what it can mean to them.
- *What am I willing to do in order to “sacrifice?”* “Sacrifice” will require some kind of action on your part. You will either have to do without, give up, alter, or postpone. It will require a personal cost. Your sacrificial plan will stimulate others to consider things that they may be able to do in order to sacrificially give.
- *How much will that allow me/us to give?* People usually think in limited terms until someone challenges them to consider expanded potential. A new level of thinking about giving must be established. The extent of your prayerful, generous financial support will help others to evaluate the quantity and quality of theirs. Let your gift be one that will encourage others to give more.



PRACTICAL SUGGESTIONS — Please consider and incorporate as many of the following suggestions as possible:

- Your talk should take no more than four minutes to give (unless more time is given).
- Fit to the occasion. If done in church, it should add to the celebration of worship.
- Put your commitment into a context. Your financial obligations and limitations provide you with many reasons why you shouldn't give much. Show them how you fought through that thinking in order to do more than you have ever thought you could do.
- Speak of your commitment in terms of an "investment." Explain how the results should affect you, your family, your parish, the greater church, and God's kingdom.
- Be sensitive to audience reactions. Your talk is being given to benefit the listener.
- Call attention to **what** you are doing and **why**, but **not who** is doing it. Speak of the **purpose** for giving, **not the person** giving it.
- Let people hear your feelings. Let them struggle with you in the making of your decision.
- Help people to think positively instead of negatively about your commitment and theirs.
- Challenge all to think creatively, act prayerfully, evaluate generously, and give sacrificially.
- Close by explaining how important this opportunity is for the parish, how meaningful this process has been for you, how much you have grown during this time, and how you hope that others will join with you in the challenge.

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS — In being asked to share your commitment with the parish, you are being given the opportunity to affect the success of your campaign by:

- Putting into words what others are thinking and experiencing about giving
- Influencing other's desire and willingness to commit
- Stimulating each to think about giving in ways never considered before
- Enhancing the amount that each eventually will give
- Impacting what the parish will be able to do for years to come as a result of what is given

ACKNOWLEDGMENT — Your personal, prayerful, generous financial commitment has the potential of expanding itself mathematically by what it will inspire others to do. You have been asked to do this because you can do it as well as anyone in the parish. People respect you, listen to you, and are willing to follow your influence and example. Thank you for being willing to use your status and standing to inspire and challenge others at this strategic time!



Pastor's Homilies/Talking Points

The Inspiration Phase allows the pastor and campaign leadership to expand the information phase to the next logical level. The Information Phase has built a knowledge base of the case and campaign, helping the parish understand the details of the campaign. The Inspiration Phase takes the campaign to the hearts and spirits of the parishioners. The understanding of stewardship, God's goodness, the need to respond, and the need to respond generously and sacrificially needs to be the focus of the homilies.

The US Bishop's Pastoral Letter on Stewardship is about helping us understand that God is the "owner" and the Christian is the "manager" of what the Owner has given him/her. Our time, talent and treasure cannot be divided into separate compartments. They are a whole package. The disciples of Jesus throughout their lives try to acknowledge God's gifts, receive them joyfully, tend them well, and give them back with joy and sacrifice. This applies to all our gifts, all our relationships and all aspects of our lives.

The homilies are a great opportunity to challenge people to embrace Christ and His life of stewardship with trust and abandon, as we seek to fulfill His will.

In prayer (time) we come to know God's will. In service (talent) and treasure (treasure) we make it happen. So involvement and financial resources must be discussed if your case is to become a reality. Financial gifts and resources make ministry in the Church possible. Your case focuses on that. Please keep the following in mind during these weekends.

1. Clear presentation of the case, clear stewardship teaching and use of lay-witnesses will help your parishioners connect with the case.
2. Cases impact people and make ministry possible. In presenting your case elements or goals, it is always important to put things in terms of how they will impact or help people. What are the benefits of this new church, gathering space, RE center, professional ministers, project... for people? Even a case such as debt reduction is going to help a parish to develop and strengthen other ministerial areas once the debt is paid down.
3. Though we are participating in this campaign for the glory of God and the strengthening of this community, people's entry into this process begins with themselves. You must answer these questions for each case element, "What's in it for me? How will this impact me? Why should I be concerned about this?" Each case element will affect different groups of people, so there will be several answers for each element.
4. In the Inspiration Phase there is a process of repeating that happens so that people come to understand and embrace the case. The repetition of the case helps the irregular Mass-attendees to have an understanding of the campaign. Not only is there repetition of the case involved, there is also additional information being given.



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5. At the Masses the weekend before printed items go out to the parishioners, (Special Edition Newsletter, Fact Sheet, and Information Packet), an announcement should be made with the print piece being described and displayed. This will increase the readership of each item.
 6. Some pastors find it helpful to keep the sermon inspirational and then use the announcement time after Mass to answer very briefly 3-5 common questions.
 7. RE Commitment Weekend – You will want to:
 - ☐ Show parishioners the pledge card – some parishes put a large mock-up of the card in church
 - ☐ Tell people at weekend three and four that they will receive a card at Mass on commitment Weekend and that you will lead them through the process of completing the card at Mass.
 - ☐ Tell them this season of prayer and reflection should help to make their gift decision.
 - ☐ Parishioners needing help should be provided tables and assistance in the back of church.
 - ☐ Cards should be completed at Mass. People are much more likely to complete a card at Mass than they are to take the card home and return it at a later time.
 - ☐ Many people wonder what they should give. Concrete examples of what they can do to make a gift over and above their normal yearly giving will help them make a generous gift. Help them think in terms of a certain amount of a weekly wage, what it costs to eat out, etc. You know what your parishioners can relate to.
 - ☐ Take enough time on Commitment Weekend to do it well.
 - ☐ Many parishes have their parishioners come to the altar and place their gifts in basket that Father is holding. If this is appropriate for your parish, it can help demonstrate the solidarity of believers. More guidance is given in the Commitment Weekend instruction.
 - ☐ A successful campaign seeks the participation of everyone. A successful campaign needs large gifts and large numbers of gifts. The Inspiration Phase is the time when 85% of the gifts will be raised. The largest gifts and most of your goal will come from those making Pacesetter and Advance Commitment gifts. The largest numbers of gifts will come from the rest of the parish family on Commitment Weekend. The parish needs both, large gifts and large numbers of gifts, to reach its goal. In the several weeks of the Response Phase, you have the opportunity of both thanking people who have made commitments and reminding those who have not done so



that there is still time to make commitments. Your gentle reminders will help your parish receive the maximum number of commitments



Inspiration Weekend I

A Call to Prayer and Discernment - Talking Points

The purpose of the campaign Inspiration Phase is to call people to a season of prayer, reflection and seeking. God has great plans for all of us. Only by prayer and reflection, that is open and honest seeking can we come to know God's plans for us and our parish, and the part God wants us to play.

God Calls Us to a Season of Prayer and Reflection

Dear Friends,

You have started to hear about and receive information regarding the *(Name of Campaign)*, a (\$amount) effort to strengthen our parishes and the Church of (Arch/Diocese) in living and proclaiming the Gospel of Jesus Christ. This effort involves all of the parishes in the Church of ((Arch/Diocese). This effort has been a long-time coming, as most worthwhile efforts are.

God has great plans for each and every one of us. When we know God's dreams and plans for us, and live them out, then we are the happiest. It is only by discernment – prayer, study, reflection, and conversations with others – that we come to know God's plans and hopes and dreams for us.

Several years ago Arch/Bishop _____ began this effort of prayer and discernment for the Church of (Arch/Diocese) asking, "Where should we be going in the future? What should we be about? What should be our priorities?"

After several years of prayer, three separate study groups, conversations with priests and lay leaders, and reflection, it became that we needed to: 1) strengthen our parishes and 2) strengthen the Church in Catholic education and faith formation at all levels.

God's Call to Renew Our Parish in Sharing the Gospel

Name of Campaign will strengthen our parish by:

- ☐ List goal 1 of parish campaign
- ☐ List goal 2 of parish campaign
- ☐ List goal 3 of parish campaign...

Name of Campaign will strengthen the Church:

- ☐ To share the saving, loving and exciting Gospel of Christ with children in our Catholic schools and Religious Education programs.
- ☐ To form and train future priests, deacons, and lay leaders who will in turn help us to live the Gospel and help us to share it with a waiting world.



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- ☐ To share God's love and the Gospel with our needy brothers and sisters throughout the world.

Acknowledging Disappointments, Believing in the Ever-Valid Good News of Christ

Now, I know that some of us have mixed feelings regarding the *(Name of Campaign)*. We have reasons to be disappointed and to even mistrust. We may be disappointed or disillusioned by church leaders, but we've also been disappointed by sports leaders, corporate leaders, and government leaders. We expect more and deserve more from these people who lead us.

We know that humans are great and glorious creatures, who are also wounded, and who are capable of disappointing us. We see this in the stories of Adam and Eve not trusting God, the stories of the leaders and people of Israel in all their flaws, stories of the apostles who abandoned Jesus in His time of greatest need, and the stories of great Christian saints and awful Christian sinners through 2,000 years of Christian history.

So, even though we have been deeply disappointed by leaders, by others and even by ourselves, we know that Jesus and His Gospel are valid for all time. We have a God who loves us, who never abandons us, who can heal us, and who prepares a place for us. The love of Christ and the power of His Gospel can transform us and our world. And it needs to!

This is exactly what *(Name of Campaign)* will help us do. It is going to strengthen us and renew us and equip us to share our faith in parishes, Catholic schools, religious education centers, faith formation centers, and colleges and universities.

(Name of Campaign) is going to help us to come together again to renew and re-double our efforts in sharing the enduring, ever-valid, powerful, and transformative Gospel of Jesus Christ. That's our call; that's the call to our parish; that's what *(Name of Campaign)* is going to help us to do.

(Name of Campaign) - God's Call to a Season of Prayer and Reflection

God has great dreams for you, your family, this parish, and the Church. In order to know these dreams and in order to have the courage to respond as God wants us to respond, I am calling this entire parish family to a season of prayer and reflection.

Through the next five weeks and beyond, I am calling you – leaders, staff, people, and children –to seek God's will for you. I ask you to pray everyday and many times during the day, "Lord, what do You want to do – through me – to accomplish Your will, for our parish and for the wider Church?" The only way God works in 2008 is through us; it's the only way God has ever worked.

So, I'm asking everyone:



To pray, “Lord, what do You want to do – through me – to accomplish Your will, for my parish and for the wider Church?”

To study and come to understand how our parish goal(s) will help us strengthen our parish and how our arch/diocesan goals will help the wider Church assist parishes in sharing the Gospel.

To seek answers to your questions from me, your campaign leaders and campaign team leaders.

To reflect on your own and with others in the parish community of the goals of *(Name of Campaign)*.

In spite of all their failures, God has always moved His people forward. Even today, with all our weaknesses, limitations, and failures, God loves us and wants to move us forward. Through *(Name of Campaign)*, God will move us forward. Through our prayer and discernment we will come to know the part God wants us to play.

Let us begin together, this season of prayer and reflection, for it’s going to take each and every one of us to renew our parish and the Church. Amen!



Inspiration Weekend II

A Vision For Our Church – Talking Points

The purpose of the campaign Inspiration Phase is to call people to a season of prayer, reflection and seeking. God has great plans for all of us. Only by prayer and reflection, that is open and honest seeking can we come to know God's plans for us and our parish, and the part God wants us to play.

Introduction Recapping Previous Call to Prayer and Reflection

Dear Friends,

Our *Faith in Our Future* campaign has begun. This is a combined effort of all of 211 parishes of the Church of Milwaukee. This campaign will 1) strengthen our parish and 2) support Catholic education and faith formation throughout the Church of Milwaukee. And because this involves all of us, and because this is so massive, this is going to have a significant impact on us for years and years to come.

For the next several weeks we are journeying through a season of prayer and reflection. God has called all of us – priests, leaders, staff, families, adults, and children – to a time of prayer and seeking. It is important that each and every one of us pray, “Lord, what do You want to do, through me, to accomplish Your will, for our parish and the Church of Milwaukee?” God has a part for each of us. The more each and every parishioner responds, the more successful this campaign will be

Casting the Vision

Today I would like to reflect on our vision, our goals, our projects here at St X.. We believe that our God holds our future in His loving hands and that He has some great hopes and dreams and plans for us. He has called us to life and is constantly showering us with blessings. We have people, loving relationships, all kinds of special gifts that come our way, and so much more. These gifts are numerous signs of God's love for us.

Even more, He has given His Son to us. He Son is another sign of this incredible love. Who gives their Son away? Someone who loves more than we do! Jesus Christ brings us God's love, the way to true fulfillment and happiness in this life, and eternal salvation. Isn't this Good News? Isn't this the Gospel? Isn't that our main message? As sons and daughters we are loved now and forever, and we have the exact same Gospel mission as Jesus: to the share justice, love, fulfillment, healing, and salvation with a waiting world.

That's what we're about here at St X. That's what *Faith in Our Future* wants to help us do in an even more effective, compelling, convincing way. *Faith in Our Future* wants to help all parishes step it up a bit and take our community life and work to the next level.



As you will remember, *Faith in Our Future* will strengthen our parish by:

- ☐ List goal 1 of parish campaign
- ☐ List goal 2 of parish campaign
- ☐ List goal 3 of parish campaign...

Parish Goal 1

In goal 1 (Name) we're going to do... (Describe the project).

I believe goal 1 (Name) will:

Help us to...

Affect these groups of people...

Make these things possible...

Be important to you because...

(At this time it is important for the pastor to "paint a picture" of what the campaign and each goal will make possible. This must always be in terms of impacting people. People, different groups in the parish want to know, "How will this affect me? How will this impact me? What's in it for me? Why should I be concerned?" Unless you can answer those questions, they have no relation or entry into the vision, goals, projects. If your goal is debt reduction, even that must be talked about in this way. Speak of the moral and financial obligation to retire the debt, the gift they are giving to future generations, AND what ministries will be enhanced after the debt is retired. What ministries will you be able to develop, grow and improve after the debt is retired?

Parish Goal 2

In goal 1 (Name) we're going to do... (Describe the project).

I believe goal 1 (Name) will:

Help us to...

Affect these groups of people...

Make these things possible...

Be important to you because...

Parish Goal 3...

In goal 1 (Name) we're going to do... (Describe the project).

I believe goal 1 (Name) will help us to ...:

Affect these groups of people...

Make these things possible...

Be important to you because...



(Optional – If you have plenty to elaborate on with the parish vision/goals, then pass on the arch/diocesan vision.)

Not only is *Faith in Our Future* going to strengthen our parish, it's going to strengthen all the parishes of the Church of Milwaukee. As you will remember with me, the three goals of *Faith in Our Future* are to:

1. To support and improve Catholic education and faith formation:
 - a. In Catholic grade schools and high schools throughout southeast Wisconsin
(How does this impact your people?)
 - b. In our parish RE programs
(How does this impact your people?)
 - c. In schools that can become Centers of Excellence for our children
(How does this impact your people?)
2. To Form Leaders and develop and strengthen Adult Faith Formation, Family Ministry and College Ministry
 - a. Priests at St Francis Seminary
 - b. Deacons and Lay Leaders at the JP II Center
(How does this impact your people?)
3. To be generous with our own gifts and give a portion of what is given to *Faith in Our Future* and share it with the poor and needy in other parts of the world.
(How does this impact your people?)

Close – God's Vision Needs Our Prayerful Consideration

God has a vision and goals for our parish and the Church of Milwaukee. And as time goes on, there will be new visions, new goals and new initiatives to be about. Let us pray each and every day, "Lord, what do you want to do – through me – to accomplish Your will for my parish and the Church of Milwaukee?" It's our prayer and talents and gifts, each and every one of us together, that will turn God's dream into reality. It's the only way it works; only way it's ever worked. Amen!



Inspiration Weekend III

Acknowledging God's Gifts and Giving Back

The purpose of the campaign Inspiration Period is to call people to a season of prayer, reflection and seeking. God has great plans for all of us. Only by prayer and reflection, that is open and honest seeking can we come to know God's plans for us and our parish, and the part God wants us to play.

God Calls Us to a Season of Prayer and Reflection

Dear Friends,

We are in the midst of Our *Faith in Our Future* campaign. This gigantic effort of all our parishes and all the Catholics of southeast Wisconsin is to strengthen our parish and to strengthen Catholic education and faith formation in the Church of Milwaukee. And because this involves all of us, and because this is so massive, this is going to have a significant impact on us for years and years to come.

Faith in Our Future will strengthen our parish by:

- ☐ List goal 1 of parish campaign
- ☐ List goal 2 of parish campaign
- ☐ List goal 3 of parish campaign...

Faith in Our Future will strengthen the Church of Milwaukee:

- ☐ To share the saving, loving and exciting Gospel of Christ with children in our Catholic schools and Religious Education programs.
- ☐ To form and train future priests, deacons, and lay leaders who will in turn help us to live the Gospel and help us to share it with a waiting world.
- ☐ To share God's love and the Gospel with our needy brothers and sisters throughout the world.

For the next several weeks we are journeying through a season of prayer and reflection. God has called all of us – priests, leaders, staff, families, adults, and children – to a time of prayer and seeking. It is important that each and every one of us pray, “Lord, what do You want to do, through me?” Please repeat those words with me now - - - “Lord, what do You want to do through me?” In these next weeks we must come to understand that the goal of this campaign is to strengthen our parish and to renew the Church of Milwaukee in the work of Catholic faith education and formation of all kinds.

Opening Our Eyes to See God's Blessings and Gifts



The journey of 1,000 miles begins with the first step. On the *Faith in Our Future* journey, our first step must be to acknowledge the blessings of an all-loving, all powerful, all-providing God. This must be our first step. In fact, we must begin with this each and every day.

Many times we walk or race through life giving no thought to where the gifts and the good things of life come from. They don't just appear. The food on our table comes from a grocer, that comes from delivery person, that comes from a food processing company, that comes again by train or truck or jet, that comes from a farm, that comes from the ground, that comes from the soil and rain and sun, that come from God.

Every gift comes from a giver; every gift in our lives comes through people, from God. Just realizing that these gifts of ours – life, good health, time, people, and countless material blessings don't just appear out of thin air, make us grateful we have such a providing God.

Don't Just See, Focus on God's Blessings!

We heard it said in sports, "Keep your eye on the ball!" It is not just enough to once and in a great while to be aware of where the ball is. We must have our eyes focused on the ball so that we can know where it is at all times. In the same way, it is really not enough for a Christian to once in awhile conjure up an awareness of his/her blessings. We really must be focused on them. This focusing on our blessings can change our lives and our attitude. Why? Because focusing on our gifts makes us feel loved and full and happy and blessed. And this is what God wants for us. As Jesus says, "I have come that you might have life and have it to the fullest."

Here are some very helpful practices that are recommended:

- ☐ Starting each morning, as you're lying in bed, naming and visualizing the five or ten things you for which you are grateful.
- ☐ Keeping a "Gratitude Journal" where you list some of the blessings and gifts you discovered that day.
- ☐ Stopping every hour to name and visualize these five blessings.
- ☐ Pausing to name and visualize your blessings when you are filled with worry, fear or dread.
- ☐ Naming and visualizing your blessings as you drift to sleep at night.

Can you imagine the difference in you, your well-being and your happiness quotient if you practiced one or a couple of these things each and every day? Maybe you could start with one that you like and after a few weeks add another, and so on.



Seeing God's Blessings, Seeing God's Love

People who feel deprived can feel unloved and unhappy. We always want something else, and something else, and something else. And because we get some of what we want but not all of what we want, we can become bitter. Who of us doesn't wish at times that we had our friend's looks, or our workmate's car, or our neighbor's house, or our classmate's electronic toy and on, and on, and on? This focusing on things that we don't have only leads to feelings of emptiness, of being unloved; of feeling we got the raw deal in life.

But Jesus shows us the path to true happiness. Jesus offers this path to all people. Jesus reveals the loving God to us. Jesus more than anyone who ever lived focused on God's gifts and blessings. Jesus more than anyone who ever lived knew that He was loved. Jesus more than anyone who ever lived, was happy and fulfilled.

Jesus wants the very same thing for us. God does loves us and bless us and gift us with all kinds of incredible things. Each of us, in our own way must stay focused on the Giver and the gifts. And if we stay focused, always, on all the gifts we have received and are receiving, we will feel full and blessed and loved and well.

Faith in Our Future Journey

As we continue on this *Faith in Our Future Journey*, it is important that we stay focused on the gifts of God, the gifts of life and love, faith, and on and on and on. When we know we're blessed we feel full, and when we feel full, we can give away. Now let us prepare for the Eucharist, seeing all our blessings, feeling full and overflowing in thanks to this God who won't stop giving. Amen!

Seeing God's Blessing and God's Love Leads to Overflowing

By focusing hourly or daily on the many gifts of God, we truly feel loved and blessed and full. Jesus kept His eyes on God and His blessings. He more than any other human being knew He was loved. He more than any other human being was happy and fulfilled. And so, this is beginning of true happiness – to focus always on God's blessing and what you have been given



Inspiration Weekend IV

Giving Back With Sacrifice – Talking Points

The purpose of the campaign Inspiration Phase is to call people to a season of prayer, reflection and seeking. God has great plans for all of us. Only by prayer and reflection, that is open and honest seeking can we come to know God's plans for us and our parish, and the part God wants us to play.

Introduction Recapping Previous Call to Prayer and Reflection

Dear Friends,

Our *Faith in Our Future* campaign has begun and we will soon be reaching the high point of our campaign, Commitment/Special Event Weekend on (Date). I have asked that you use these weeks as a season prayer and reflection to consider God's call to build up our parish and the Church of Milwaukee, and to consider how you will respond to this call.

This campaign is going to affect our parish and diocese for years and years to come. Our vision for our parish is to: (List parish initiatives). Our vision for our archdiocese is to strengthen Catholic education and faith formation for all age groups for years to come.

So please, pray and consider our goals. Pray and look at the blessings God has given you. Pray and decided how He is calling you to best use your gifts. And pray about and consider a gift for three years that will be a stretch, and a reach, and a real sacrifice for you.

Gifts and Sacrifices

All of us have been given gifts throughout our lives. And at the right times, those gifts have meant so much to us. They've caused us to overflow with happiness and gratitude. We also have given gifts to others. Sometimes those gifts are made easily and sometimes those gifts have been made at great cost to us.

Did you know that there is a difference between a gift and sacrifice? Some gifts are made at little cost to us; some gifts are made at a great deal of cost to us. A gift is something that is given from one person to another. A sacrifice is a gift that is given that means a change in the giver's lifestyle. A sacrifice is made by giving something up for awhile or putting something off for a while. Have you ever given a gift that required changing your lifestyle, that required giving up something or putting off something, so that the gift could be given.

For some parents with children, parents who may be flush with plenty of money, the gift of a college education to a child may be no sacrifice at all. The money from the bank account may not be missed at all.



For other parents, parents who have little savings, the gift of a college education to the children may mean that both parents have to work or that one or both parents may need to take on second jobs. In this instance, these parents are changing their lifestyles and giving up something at great cost to them, so that their children may attend a good college.

Widows Mite

This is of course what we refer to as the “widow’s mite.” Jesus points out the gifts of two people: the rich man and the widow. The rich man is making a gift to the temple, and though it is a large gift, he has so much that he doesn’t miss it. The widow on the other hand makes a gift, the gift of her last two coins, the only money she has to live on and buy food.

They both make gifts, the rich man and the widow. The rich man’s gift continues to be a gift, the widow’s gift becomes a sacrifice. So, a sacrifice is a gift that we notice, that we really feel when we give it to another, is very substantial to the one giving and is a gift that causes a great change in our life and our lifestyle.

Sacrifice Through the Ages

As we know, God gave us His Son Jesus as a gift, but God’s gift was also a sacrifice. It was a significant gift. It was felt by God. We could say it cost God. Wouldn’t each of us feel something if we gave our children away to others? Wouldn’t we suffer to see them rejected by their friends and peers, to see them physically threatened and harmed, to see them slowly tortured, and to even see them murdered? It would devastate all parents.

Well, that is what the Father did for us. He gave us His Son and it was a sacrifice for Him, it cost Him dearly, and He “felt” it.

The sacrifice of the Father for us, is the model for the Church, for Christians in all ages. It is only by sacrifice that this community goes forward. It was the sacrifice of the Father that gave us Jesus, our Savior. It was the sacrifice of Jesus on the cross that won the hope of eternal life. It was the sacrifice of Peter and Paul and the Apostles that spread the faith throughout the Mediterranean. It was the sacrifice of Christians through 2,000 years of history that made it possible for us to live in faith today. And it was the sacrifice of our grandparents and great-grandparents that built these beautiful communities and churches and schools here in southeastern Wisconsin.

Sacrifice Gives Life

Sacrifice costs the giver, but it gives life to the receiver. The example of God and Jesus and our ancestors in faith show us this. The sacrifices of parents for children show us this. So while gifts may be given with some great cost involved, we gladly make them, don’t we? The cost that comes to us means greater life for others. It’s always been that way, and it always will.

Giving and Sacrificing for *Faith in Our Future*



In the last few weeks we have sketched for you our vision for our parish and for the Church of Milwaukee. This campaign is really about pulling together as a community and renewing our efforts at sharing our saving faith in our parishes, through Catholic education and through all levels of faith formation. We've all been through a lot these last several years, but we are still loved by God, we are still Disciples of Christ, we are still called to spread the Gospel and further the Kingdom in our corner of the world.

Over the next week I ask you to prayerfully consider a gift our *Faith in Our Future* campaign .I ask you to continue your Sunday stewardship. That is what makes our parish strong. I ask you to continue your gift to the Catholic Stewardship Appeal. That makes our diocese strong. And if you are able, I ask you to prayerfully consider a gift to our campaign, a gift that is over and above your Sunday stewardship to the parish and your giving to Catholic Stewardship Appeal.

Everyone once in a while we have to do something extra like add on to a house, build a new house, build a church, add a gathering space, provide new ministries... This gigantic effort of God's people in Southeastern Wisconsin is to strengthen our parishes and redouble our efforts at sharing the Gospel and our Catholic faith in all kinds of ways. This is a historic appointment with God and destiny as we have never done anything of this kind in the history of our diocese.

Many will ask, "How much should I give?" I am asking you to prayerfully consider a three-year gift. Since this is the most significant undertaking of its kind in the history of our diocese, I would begin by asking you to consider a gift of one's year's worth of giving to *Faith in Our Future*. If a person gives \$1,000 a year to the church; I would ask you to consider at least a \$1,000 gift to *Faith in Our Future*. If a person gives \$25,000 a year to the church; I would ask you to consider at least a \$25,000 gift to *Faith in Our Future*.

And now, I would also ask that your gift be a sacrifice. That is, consider giving up something or putting off something so that you could give 50% more. Perhaps some beer or wine, movies or dinners out, new furniture, a new car, a trip... I can't tell you what a sacrifice is for you. That is for you and God to decide. But let your gift be a sacrifice! If a person gives \$1,000 a year to the church, then, they might consider a \$1,500 gift to *Faith in Our Future*. That might be a sacrifice. If a person gives \$25,000 a year to the church, then, they might pray about a \$35,000 gift to *Faith in Our Future*. That might be a sacrifice.

Next weekend is our Commitment Weekend. Next weekend we will be offering our *Faith in Our Future* gifts to God. I ask you to pray every day and many times during the day to God saying, "Lord, what do you want to do – through me – to accomplish Your will for my parish and for the Church of Milwaukee?" Let God guide you to a gift that is a sacrifice, that pleases Him, and that pleases you.



A PASTOR'S TESTIMONY

Fr. Greg Kelly
St. Gabriel the Archangel
McKinney, Texas

One of the best things that goes along with occupying that chair during Mass is that the collection basket never comes by. You may wish for such a seat from time to time; it may seem like a perk. But as we have been preparing for the stewardship drive and as I have been writing you letters about it and helping make a video, going to meetings, listening; I have also been thinking about my own pledge and what it would mean to me to give sacrificially, what it would mean to make a lifestyle adjustment in order to give sacrificially. As you probably know, priests don't make a lot of money, but neither do we suffer from need. What I have been given has always been more than enough and much else is provided – my home and meals, and thanks to your generosity this summer, a nice automobile. Thinking about my own pledge and what it would mean to give sacrificially has forced attention to something I don't think about much. I have a kind of a box that I live within and I know roughly what falls inside that box and what lies outside of it, what I can afford to do and not do, and I do that from year to year.

But I have never been involved in something like this before. When I went to the University of Dallas as chaplain in 1986, the previous chaplain had completed the building of a 450-seat chapel the year before and already paid for it. I simply got to move in and enjoy the fruits of his work. I'm sure that some of you have been involved in building projects in other places and have some idea of the process, but many have never done anything like this before. This has forced me to put numbers down on a piece of paper and see where all this money goes; to try to be less vague about it. And it goes to a lot of places which would sound familiar to you — taxes, retirement, phone, travel, gifts, subscriptions, charities and church, entertainment, and miscellaneous.

I kept moving numbers around on a page and kept thinking about the question of sacrificial giving. What does that mean? Not just a philosophical question, but a practical one — what do I need to do differently? What needs to go? I'm not sure that I have resolved this yet. One place I look where there is waste is on a lot of spur-of-the-moment buying of books and subscriptions — looking for homily ideas or the perfect idea for this project or committee or this liturgy and I need to weigh those decisions more carefully. Maybe I can help build buildings rather than just piles of magazines and books destined for Half Price Books and McKinney recycling. But this is still something I am praying over trying to resolve in my own mind, how to live more simply and frugally. At this point, I think that I can pledge about \$1,800 for the ministry and operating of the parish next year, and \$7,620 for the building over the next three years.

I want this gift, however small, to be part of what rises out of the ground over the next 22 months or so out on Virginia Parkway and County Road 157. To live a little more carefully to make that gift possible, I invite you to some considerations over the next few weeks. What this will mean for each of you, only you can say. It is the work of the wisdom of God's spirit and your own response out of the unique circumstances of your life. I like to think sometimes that the



circumstances of my life are unique, not easily understood or compared to others and in ways that is true. Not many of you are 42-year-old male celibates, ordained. But the same is true of the circumstances of your life, once you get below the surface similarities of being married, having children, or living in a certain neighborhood.

They are unique for the mix of relationships and histories and pressures and fears and joys and experiences and you alone know that from the inside and can judge what makes sense, what is sacrificial for you. The growth of this parish, its ministries and facilities, will depend on the sacrificial gifts of many, gifts of all sizes and shapes. I feel privileged in joining you and asking you to join me in the work of making that gift — to provide a home for ourselves, as well as the children and youth of this parish and the many who will follow in the generations that will follow us. I would also invite the children and youth of the parish to make a pledge to this work as well.

This sacrificial gift is connected intimately with the Eucharist we celebrate here each week. The collection is not just a convenient way to collect money, but it is a specific concrete gift of ourselves — the time that we invest in work; the talents that make that work possible and fruitful; the talents that make it a source of satisfaction of support for ourselves and our families: a fulfilling of the biblical mandate to return to the Lord a tithe, the first fruits of our work, our treasure. It is a gift of thanksgiving, joined to the offering of the Eucharist as it is placed before the altar, and dedicated to the work of the church and the building of the church.

What this is for each of us has to be the result of our own prayers, reflections, consideration of ourselves, and then conversations with spouse and family. I invite you to that prayer and reflection over the next several weeks.



Pastor's Testimonial

How are an “a-hah” moment and a “du-uh” moment related? An “a-hah” is the glee of a connection made. “Du-uh” is the groan of a connection missed.

CONNECTIONS: they help us make sense of, to focus upon, and to understand a broader meaning to our immediate reality. They are memory makers.

- Sometimes strange, as in “*déjà vu*.”
- But most times they are images, metaphors, ideas which, when “connecting,” reveal, teach, speak a truth larger than themselves.

Our Gospel account today is one of connections.

- We have heard these images and encounters before, here, in this place, from this book.
- But more so, if we were to re-read the full gospel of John, today's reading would be for us an echo of images and encounters already seen and read. Those echoes are connections. And the connections lead us to reflection and understanding.

Two earlier passages in John are recalled. We may have already guessed them:

- The multiplication of loaves in Chapter 6.
- The denial of Jesus by Peter in Chapter 18.

MULTIPLICATION: In the multiplication event, we hear of miraculous abundance. Fish and bread are prominent. A multitude is fed from what seemed so little, a scarcity. There is much left over, enough for 12 baskets — that is, the whole nation; or for each apostle to distribute more.

Our gospel account today is, as well, an event of miraculous abundance. Fish and bread are prominent. A multitude of fish are caught where before there had been a scarcity. So many are caught, in fact, that their number seemingly represents all the nations know of Jesus' time.

The apostles are witnesses to and participants in both of these events. And in both, they remain silent for lack of understanding.

At both, they are fed, in body and spirit, by the Lord who has blessed the food and them. These connections reveal the Evangelist's purpose. He would have all who would hear set themselves upon the mission of Jesus, strengthened and sustained by the meal, the Eucharist.

DENIALS: Our Gospel account also harkens us back to Peter's three denials of Jesus. There we remember Peter being asked 3 times to say he knew Jesus. And there we know of Peter's three denials of a relationship to him. Here, on the other hand, we witness Jesus' asking the three questions of Peter and hearing three intense acclamations of a loving relationship to the Lord. In the former, we recall the tradition of Peter's boast to “die with you” as he draws the sword and severs the servant's ear. We also witness his abject failure in that boast. But it is no longer a boast but a commission: follow me.



Once again, these connections reveal to us the mind of the Evangelist for his readers. What was in and through Jesus will go on! The full reality of Jesus' mission, ministry and self-sacrifice are to continue in the disciples as they follow.

These connections by the evangelist are not just a clever literary tool. They are for the good of any listener and follower of the Lord. For they reveal truth, reinforce it, and urge it to be revealed and sustained in "following me."

My brothers and sisters, we need such connections — that we might see beyond our senses in faith, in hope, in love. That we might **FOLLOW!**

CONNECTIONS: Connections help us to follow the Lord. I have experienced that time and again. But recently, in the context of our Legacy of Hope Capital and Endowment Campaign, I have experienced very real connections to:

- Scarcity and abundance
- Mission and ministry
- Sacrifice
- And the Meal

My first reaction to the Legacy of Hope Capital and Endowment Campaign was OK. I sense the need. I see how it fits. I understand. And I believe that the Church — if it is to further its work in central and southern Indiana and SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral Parish, if it wants to further its ministry of worship, song, and hospitality in the next Century — needs this extraordinary effort.

And so I promised to lead, with optimism and conviction and loyalty, because that was what was needed. That was what was expected. That is what I believe.

But my second reaction to the Legacy of Hope was far more personal and self-directed. "How am I going to find any more 'treasure' for this effort in my personal, relatively fixed income? I may have learned some effective strategies from my dad's wizardry of "finding enough from a scarcity" (just ask my mom; or my sister Mary!). But wasn't I already mostly to my limit there?

Being the person I am, I faced the question pragmatically. I added up my annual income numbers, looked at my current charitable giving to parish, Archdiocese, and other charities, and then "found" a number which realistically stretched me. It meant being more vigilant. It meant setting aside **FIRST** this commitment every month for 3 years! It meant making hard choices on top of already hard choices. But I saw the good it would do for so many! And I saw the greater good and embraced the sacrifice beyond the other good things I was not choosing.

Now, a bit of me wanted to ask some of my brother priests "what are you doing?" (I said to myself that I was trying to find a 'measuring stick.') Actually, I wanted to compare. Depending on what I found out, I could

- Feel relatively comfortable with my conclusion (I did as well!).
- Feel very good about my conclusion (I did much better!).



-
- Or feel some guilt so I'd do more!

But that was flawed thinking, for the "sacrifice" being offered had nothing to do with attempting to "equal" another's gift, or seeing how equal their gift was to mine.

I had my number. And that was that. I thought. But later on I had a third reaction to the Legacy. "Yes. I'm giving from my income. And it is a practical approach I have taken. But is it, was it, prayerful?" Thus began a search for prayerful connections. I found them in Lent, Holy Week, and Easter Joy as revealed in reflection upon the Word of these seasons and their liturgies.

Thus fed, I realized anew that pursuit of goals which proclaim the Word, make possible good and uplifting communal prayer, and maintain that Word's availability to the daily lives of our city and Archdiocese into the future were more valuable to me than many other things.

Which led me to ask, "What more might I find in my personal 'holdings'?" (Which are pretty small by any stretch.)

I've modified my plan now. The majority portion of that holding will go toward our goal here. The lesser remainder will go to my IRA. In that one decision, I doubled my pledge amount.

In one sense, then, the sacrifice of 3 years will now "keep on" until I die. For what would have gone to growth through investment and thence to my retirement will not be for me. And I will not be in as much "control" of my future days. But that's okay. For the good of such surety and control pales before the good which God's Word and the prayerful worship of God's people leading to service can do.

- Scarcity and abundance
- Sacrifice
- Mission and ministry
- And The Meal

Connections made by John in the Gospel. Connections we are offered to make in our lives right now.



Stewardship Homily

"Whoever does not accept the Kingdom of God like a child will not enter it."

Children were considered of little importance in the time of Jesus. It was natural and understandable to those present that the disciples were trying to "get them out of the way." Yet Jesus places the children before him and embraces them; he embraces that which society would ignore. He calls his disciples to a place where all is celebrated as God's gift; where awareness of who we are in God's eyes is our greatest treasure.

Last weekend, Fr. George proclaimed the founding vision of this parish: a place **where all are welcome**. Church of the Holy Spirit has since become home for many that were seeking a faith community. We have celebrated our children, youth, and seniors. We have welcomed immigrants from all corners of the earth, who now belong to the "**we**" of this faith community. We have been allowing the Spirit to show us how communion is celebrated among diverse cultures and in several languages of prayer.

This weekend, we turn to a spiritual attitude that supports our vision: the way of stewardship. "Okay, here it comes, the money pitch," you might be thinking. In truth, I would have thought the same two years ago. I have been told that embracing stewardship is a gradual process of conversion; I can attest that this has been true for me.

The stewardship of a disciple is not about giving money to the church. It is about how we spend the time, talents, and treasure of our lives. We must spend our time and talents in each moment of our lives – whether by conscious direction or by default. Our time and talents, in turn, enable us to accumulate treasure, which can be spent or saved. Yet even our treasure can be limited by factors beyond our control: such as gender, skin color, and the place of our birth. Time, talents, and treasure all come to us as a gift.

Patrick, my second nephew, turned one year old last August. After a song, candle and cake, he sat in the living room opening his presents. He liked the toys, books, and cards; yet he was fascinated by the envelopes, the boxes, and the sound and sense of tearing the wrapping paper. This would have been enough to fill him with wonder and joy.

Now Nicholas, his older brother, was not quite as joyful. At three, he has already grasped the concept of "mine," and he was not too pleased about these new presents that "belonged" to his brother. In time, Nicholas will come to understand "ours," the mature joy found in sharing freely with others. Yet, if he is anything like his godfather, he will continue to struggle with the concepts of "mine," "yours," and "ours." To sit with Patrick in the midst of the colorful wrapping paper, the torn envelopes, and the empty boxes is to know that all is a gift. To realize that all is a gift **from God** is to cease to envy another's gifts and to join in awe, wonder, and gratitude.



Gratitude is the lifeblood of stewardship. Gratitude leads us to use the gift in the spirit intended by the giver. I love Trinidad's, yet if someone gives me a one pound box of them, I realize that they presumed that I would share them with others. God gives us time, talents, and treasure to use as we choose. Gratitude for God's gifts causes me to want to spend them in the spirit in which God has given them. **This** is stewardship.

Stewardship is not about giving a percentage of what we have to those in need. Stewardship is placing **all** of what we have, **all of our time, talents, and treasure**, in God's hands — asking God to direct us in spending them each day.

Stewardship may seem to be reserved for the saintly and the simple. Yet, I have come to realize that stewardship has always been part of my life. And, it is very much a part of this faith community and of the lives of those who form this communion in Christ. We live the attitude of stewardship when we decide to be actively faithful in our God-given commitments to love, whether through marriage, celibacy, or the single life. We live the attitude of stewardship when we ensure that our everyday actions witness to our children and youth the values we want them to make their own. We live the attitude of stewardship when we share with the hungry, the homeless, and the oppressed out of the recognition that we are one with them.

Stewardship is nothing more than to do the above as a conscious, deliberate choice. Stewardship asks me to let go of the fear of not having enough — to realize that there is never enough. Stewardship asks us to trust in God's care for us — to discover that in spending our gifts to accomplish what God seeks to do through us, we uncover an incredible abundance. Stewardship asks us to see that our gifts of time, talents, and treasure have been given to us for the good of all.

So what about the money? Stewardship is at the heart of the campaign to expand our facilities so that we can more adequately minister within and beyond this community. Obviously, we will need money to do so. Yet, in the attitude of stewardship, no one can tell another person what the other's gift to this project should be. Each of us is asked to consider, prayerfully and thoughtfully, what God is seeking to do through me and my household. What part does God want my household to play in the larger work that God wants to accomplish through all of us?

I have participated in three capital campaigns during almost 20 years of priesthood. At Maternity BVM in 1983, I determined my commitment by dividing the total amount needed by the number of parish households. At St. Sebastian in 1987, I chose to commit a certain percent of my annual income. At St. Francis Xavier in 1993, I chose to commit slightly more than the average recommended amount. As Pastor, I decided that this time I had to stretch even farther than I had before.

Eighteen months ago, I began to use the Sunday envelopes on a weekly basis. Since our campaign goal is three times the annual parish income, I decided to determine my commitment by multiplying my annual parish contribution by three. I reflected further, and remembered that the cost of completing both phases of the proposed project was closer to five times the annual parish income. I therefore decided to increase my commitment to five times my annual



parish contribution. I was feeling rather pleased with my generosity and willingness to support the project. Then I realized that, once more, I had used a combination of mathematical formulas to determine what I wanted to give. This is not stewardship.

So I brought the matter to prayer. After a few days, I found myself thinking about an amount that was twice what I was intending to give. I decided that this was a misguided desire to “look good” or overachieve. I listened for a more reasonable voice, but none came. “That’s too much money,” I said to God. “I realize that sacrificial giving is supposed to involve some stretching, but that would tear some ligaments!” I then remembered something that our consultant had shared. He said that he had found in his own life, and in the lives of those with whom he has worked, God always provided a way for people to fulfill the commitments that God asks of them.

Then I saw it. I am about to pay off the mortgage on a condominium in Chicago. I had planned to use the money now spent on the mortgage to invest in improvements to the condo. None of these improvements are extravagant; at the same time, none of them are critical. If I defer the improvements, and contribute that amount monthly for three years, I reach the exact amount that God kept shouting in my ear. To be honest, I wasn’t overjoyed about this revelation. I continued to seek a reason to lower the amount — with God’s blessing, of course.

I do not intend to share the amount with you today. It is really not about the money; it is about stewardship and prayer. I have come to believe that my commitment to this campaign represents what God is seeking to do through me as part of the larger parish project. I trust that in putting off something I would like to do now, I am placing my gifts at the service of God’s desires at this point in my life. I trust that in fulfilling my commitment to build in hope so that this faith community may continue to reach out in compassion, I will discover abundance far beyond what I can imagine. I believe that this can be true for all of us. I look forward to sitting with Patrick on the living room floor once again — delighting in torn bits of colored paper and exploring the wonder of empty boxes. For this, Jesus reminds us, is the entrance to the Kingdom of God.



Commitment Weekend Instruction Process

ORDER OF LITURGY DURING THE COMMITMENT WEEKEND MASS

I. Homily

- ☐ Complete commitment cards and seal in envelopes (see attached script)
- ☐ Procession to the altar-Father- or pass the offertory basket (music: instrumental or choir or assembly)
- ☐ Prayer (see attached prayer)

II. Creed

III. General Intercessions



SAMPLE SCRIPT FOR THE ASK AT THE COMMITMENT WEEKEND MASSES

My Dear Friends,

For the last few weeks we have been learning, talking, and hopefully praying about our *(Campaign Title)* capital stewardship campaign. This important stewardship effort will allow our parish and diocese to expand and strengthen the life and ministry of Jesus for decades to come. It will also allow *(Name of Parish)* to address some critical and important projects (name specific parish capital projects).

It is now time for each of us to show our commitment to the Lord and this call of His to build up our faith communities. As I shared with you earlier, I am committing (\$_____) to be paid over the next three years and I will sign my pledge today in your presence. I hope that each household represented here this morning will register their commitment as well.

Before we make our commitments, I am pleased to share with you some very good news. You are aware that our goal is (\$_____). Believing that this campaign is vital to the future of both our parish and the arch/diocese, (#_____) of our families and households have made their commitments early as an act of faith and encouragement for the rest of us. Their (#_____) commitments together total (\$_____), or (_____%) of our goal. With their leadership and that strong start, we can make it!



This weekend the whole parish family will begin responding to God's call. There are pledge cards and pens at the ends of the pews. I now ask everyone to pass those cards and pencils down the pews to your neighbors. **(Wait until all have done so.)** There are commitment cards and privacy envelopes in the pews. If the head of each household will take one, we will fill it out together.

Now, let us commit ourselves to the Lord and to *(Campaign Title)*.

- 1. On the top, left-hand side, we have spaces for your vital information**
2. On the first line...
3. Then on the next line...
4. Please clearly print your name, address, and telephone number
5. And finally, on the last line...
- 6. On the top, right hand side, we have spaces for your gift – your total gift, your enclosed or down payment and your remaining balance.**
7. Please take a moment to prayerfully consider and complete this portion of your card.
- 8. On the bottom right side of the card is a request for procedural information.**
9. When do you want you pledge to begin? December, January or at some other date?
10. How often do you want to receive statements? Monthly, quarterly or annually?
11. Do you want to use your credit card or Electronic Funds Transfer to make your payments? If you wish to use either of these, there is information to give on the back of your pledge card.
12. Do you wish to make a gift of stock or something else? If you wish to do this, there is a box to check.
- 13. If you wish to make a down payment today, please make out your check to *(Name of Campaign)*. If you are not able to complete your pledge card today, we will be giving**



you opportunities over the next couple weekends to do so. Our goal is to have maximum participation in prayer, service and sharing in *(Name of Campaign)*.

14. Now, please take a moment to complete the rest of your pledge. (Wait one or two minutes to let them do this.)

Please remember that this commitment is not a contract with God or the parish, but rather, our “outward and visible sign” of the commitment we make to God as the best possible stewards we can be.

Note: (While you are giving them time to complete their cards, fill out a duplicate in their presence. It is important that you do this at each Mass at the time of the ask.)

Now place the card inside the privacy envelope and seal it. At this time, I would like to ask the ushers to collect the commitment cards. Please place your sealed envelope in that collection. Then together we will offer our gifts to God in gratefulness for His many blessings.

(When the commitment cards are brought forward, the prayer on the following page would be appropriate.)



PRAYER FOR RECEIVING THE COMMITMENT CARDS

Gracious and loving Father,

We ask you to receive these commitment cards
As a sign of the thankfulness we hold
For all the blessings You have graciously bestowed upon us,
but chiefly the gift of your love that
Comes to us through your Son, Christ our Lord.

We ask you to bless these commitments we make today.
May they come to you from faith-filled, joyful and overflowing hearts.
May they be a sign of the true treasure that we believe we hold in Jesus.
And may these gifts build up the Kingdom in our community, our diocese, and our corner of
the world for years and years to come.

As you have given us faith and grateful hearts necessary to make these gifts,
Now give us the strength of your Spirit
To accomplish all that which we have promised.

We ask all this through our Lord Jesus Christ, Your Son,
Who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit,
One God forever and ever. Amen



INSPIRATION PHASE LITURGY PLANNER

(_dates_) INFORMATION WEEKEND(s)

- Distribution of Information Packets
- Bishop's Campaign DVD (Optional)
- Campaign Chairs share
- Parish DVD (Optional)

(_dates_) WEEKEND 1: Theme: Introduction to Stewardship – *Call to Prayer*

- Homily on Theology of Stewardship
- Parish Video
- Music: Stewardship focused
 - Mass Setting: _____
 - Opening Hymn: _____
 - Psalm: _____
 - Offertory: _____
 - Communion Hymn: _____
 - Closing Hymn: _____
- Witness Talk: _____
- Children's Activity: * _____
- Youth Activity: ** _____

(_dates_) WEEKEND 2: Theme: Stewardship of Prayer- *What does God desire for us?*

- Homily on Stewardship of Prayer
- Music: Stewardship & Prayer focused
 - Mass Setting: _____
 - Opening Hymn: _____
 - Psalm: _____
 - Offertory: _____
 - Communion Hymn: _____
 - Closing Hymn: _____
- Witness Talk: _____
- Children's Activity: * _____
- Youth Activity: ** _____



(_dates_) **WEEKEND 3: Stewardship of Sharing - *What sacrifice can I return to the Lord?***

- Homily with Sharing emphasis
- Music: Stewardship & Sharing focused
 - Mass Setting: _____
 - Opening Hymn: _____
 - Psalm: _____
 - Offertory: _____
 - Communion Hymn: _____
 - Closing Hymn: _____
- Witness Talk: _____
- Children's Activity: * _____
- Youth Activity: ** _____

(_dates_) **WEEKEND 4: SPECIAL EVENT/COMMITMENT WEEKEND**
Stewardship Commitment – *What is God asking me to do?*

- Homily with Commitment emphasis
- Music: Stewardship & Commitment focused
 - Mass Setting: _____
 - Opening Hymn: _____
 - Psalm: _____
 - Offertory: _____
 - Communion Hymn: _____
 - Closing Hymn: _____
- Witness Talk: _____
- Children's Activity: * _____
- Youth Activity: ** _____

(_dates_) **CELEBRATION WEEKEND**

- Homily with Celebration emphasis
- Music: Reflective on accomplishments focused
- Witness Talk: _____
- Children's Activity: * _____
- Youth Activity: ** _____

* _____ add your plan here; send to Stewardship Coordinator

** _____ add your plan here; send to Stewardship Coordinator

PACESETTER GIFTS

APPENDICES



PACESETTER PROCESS DATES

The Pacesetter Gifts Leader(s) will be asked to work with the Pastor, Campaign Chairs and Advance Commitment Leaders to identify pacesetters (those able to make one of the top 10 gifts) and develop strategies to inform and solicit pacesetters.

Training ->Build Team -> Prospect Review -> Solicitor Recruitment -> Solicitor Training ->Pacesetter Solicitation -> Thanking/Recognition of Pacesetters

MEETINGS

| | |
|--|-------|
| Leadership Team Training/Pacesetter Gifts Meeting #1 | _____ |
| Report #1/Pacesetter Gifts Meeting #2 | _____ |
| Report #2/Pacesetter Gifts Meeting #3 | _____ |
| Report #3/Pacesetter Gifts Meeting #4 | _____ |
| (If scheduled) Report #4/Pacesetter Gifts Meeting 5 | _____ |

TASKS COMPLETED

| | |
|-------------------------------------|-------|
| Lists Gathered by: | _____ |
| Prospect Review started by: | _____ |
| Prospect Review completed by: | _____ |
| Solicitors recruited by: | _____ |
| Solicitors trained on: | _____ |
| Pastor Announcement Letter sent on: | _____ |
| Pacesetter visits started by: | _____ |
| Pacesetter visits completed by: | _____ |
| Advance Commitment Gathering: | _____ |



Pacesetter Gifts: Prospect Review

PRIOR TO PROSPECT REVIEW

- Prepare a list of top donors in the parish.
- If the parish has previously participated in a capital campaign, major gifts from that campaign should be available and should be reviewed along with other names on the top donor list.

CONDUCTING PROSPECT REVIEW

Pacesetter Gifts Team: the contents of the meeting are anonymous and confidential. Information exchanged in this meeting will remain confidential and anonymous.

In the case of every prospective donor:

- Rate and evaluate the ability to give.
- Determine capacity, access, and relevance.
- Identify the best person to make the visit.
- Seek a realistically large — hopefully the maximum — potential gift, providing the donor with an amount or range to pray about.

The Gift Profile shows the Pacesetter Gifts Team what types of gifts are needed. Assign an ask amount to each individual who seems capable of a major gift. The top gift on the gift profile chart isn't a limit. If you feel a parishioner is capable of a larger gift, then suggest a gift amount.

ASSIGN A TWO-AXIS RANK TO EACH DONOR

- Review each of the names of the top donors to the parish
- First Consider Financial Capacity to Make the Gift:
 - 1** – could probably give at one of the top two gift levels of the Gift Profile chart's first tier.
 - 2** – could probably give at the lower level(s) of the Gift Profile chart's first tier.
 - 3** – Could probably give at one of the top levels of the Gift Profile chart's second tier.
- Next, consider the prospect's potential interest in the project and desire to make a gift.
 - A** – Is committed to the campaign and/or project and will most definitely make a gift.
 - B** – Is somewhat unsure about the campaign or the project, but with information will likely make some gift.
 - C** – Is very unsure about the project and the campaign. Will require much more information and cultivation.



-
- Once ranked, assign a gift ask level to each prospect.
 - Consult the chart below to determine where the prospect falls in the priority of contacts to be made.

Once an amount is assigned and a priority set, determine the best possible person to make the visit. This may be a combination of the Pastor, Pacesetter Gifts Leader, Campaign Leader, or some other individual. There needs to be an affinity between the prospect and those making the ask.

After all prospective donors on the list have been reviewed: **are there other names that should be added.** Someone who is not on the top donor list but the team feels might be capable of making a major gift. Review these additional names and assign a gift amount and a potential visitor.

Since the Diocese is conducting a Major Gifts effort, go back to those ranked **1-A**. Could the individual be considered for a larger ask amount, based on the needs of the Diocese. Would the Bishop be the best and most influential person to make the ask?

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER DURING PROSPECT REVIEW

- What kind of work do they do?
- Are they married?
- Do they have children? Ages? Attend Catholic/private school?
- Where do they live?
- Hobbies?
- Interests as it pertains to the parish?
- Do they volunteer at the church? Past or present? What role do they play?
- Do they give to any other organization or within the community?
- Does anyone know who else might be able to give an opinion on this prospect?
- What would motivate them to give to the campaign?



Prospect Priority Ranking Chart

Financial Ability

| | | | |
|---|------------------------------|-----------|-----------|
| 1 | Top Priority Prospects | Second | Third |
| 2 | Tier | Prospects | Tier |
| 3 | | | Prospects |

Interest/Commitment

A B C

Prospects in the Pink area should be referred to the Advanced Commitment Committee, although those marked as 1-C might still be pacesetter prospects.



PACESETTER PACKET ITEMS

PACESETTER INFORMATION PACKET

These items should be put into a nice, heavy pocketed folder with their name on it or a 9x11 envelope.

- ☐ Parish/Arch/Diocesan Brochure **OR** Fact Sheet
- ☐ A Question and Answer Sheet
- ☐ Ways of Giving (provided by consultant)
- ☐ (Arch)diocesan AND parish DVDs – (if available)
- ☐ Prayer Card
- ☐ Gift Profile Chart
- ☐ Ancillary Items as needed



Sample Pacesetter Event Invitation Letter

«GreetingLine»

For several years the leadership of (name of parish) has explored the need for (insert brief description of the project). Based on several factors all indications are that we need to prepare for (need the case fulfills). After much prayer and planning it has been determined that now is the time that we must fulfill these needs.

Thus we are beginning our (name of campaign). As a kickoff to the campaign we are inviting key leaders to a gathering on (date) to learn more about the details and financial needs of this important initiative. As one of those leaders in our parish and community your involvement and support are essential as we prepare for our future.

Please join us as we join hearts and hands to make God's vision for our parish a reality.

(Date)

(Time)

(Location)

(Refreshments)

RSPV to _____ at _____

Sincerely,

Father _____



Sample Pacesetter Gifts Dinner Invitation

Dear (names),

We are so grateful for our parish, (parish name), its long history and its place in the hearts of all who call it home. Your involvement is important and because of that we want to personally invite you to one of two dinners in our homes on either (dates).

Our parish is one of the first to be a part of the (name of campaign) Capital Stewardship Campaign that is taking place in parishes across (Arch) diocese. This campaign will allow us to strengthen our ability to do ministry and meet the needs of our parish and school for years to come.

The (date) dinner, at __PM, will take place at the _____ and the (date) dinner at __PM at the _____. These dinners will be intimate with a handful of other parishioners, and Father (name), our pastor, (name), and our consultant from O'Meara Ferguson will join us. We will enjoy food and fellowship together and hear from Father (name) and (consultant name) about our campaign and its importance to our present and future.

One of us will be calling you in the next few days to confirm your attendance. We sincerely hope that you will take time to attend. Financial commitments to our parish will not be taken at the dinners. We will provide information that hopefully will help you understand the campaign and its importance to our parish and (Arch) diocese.

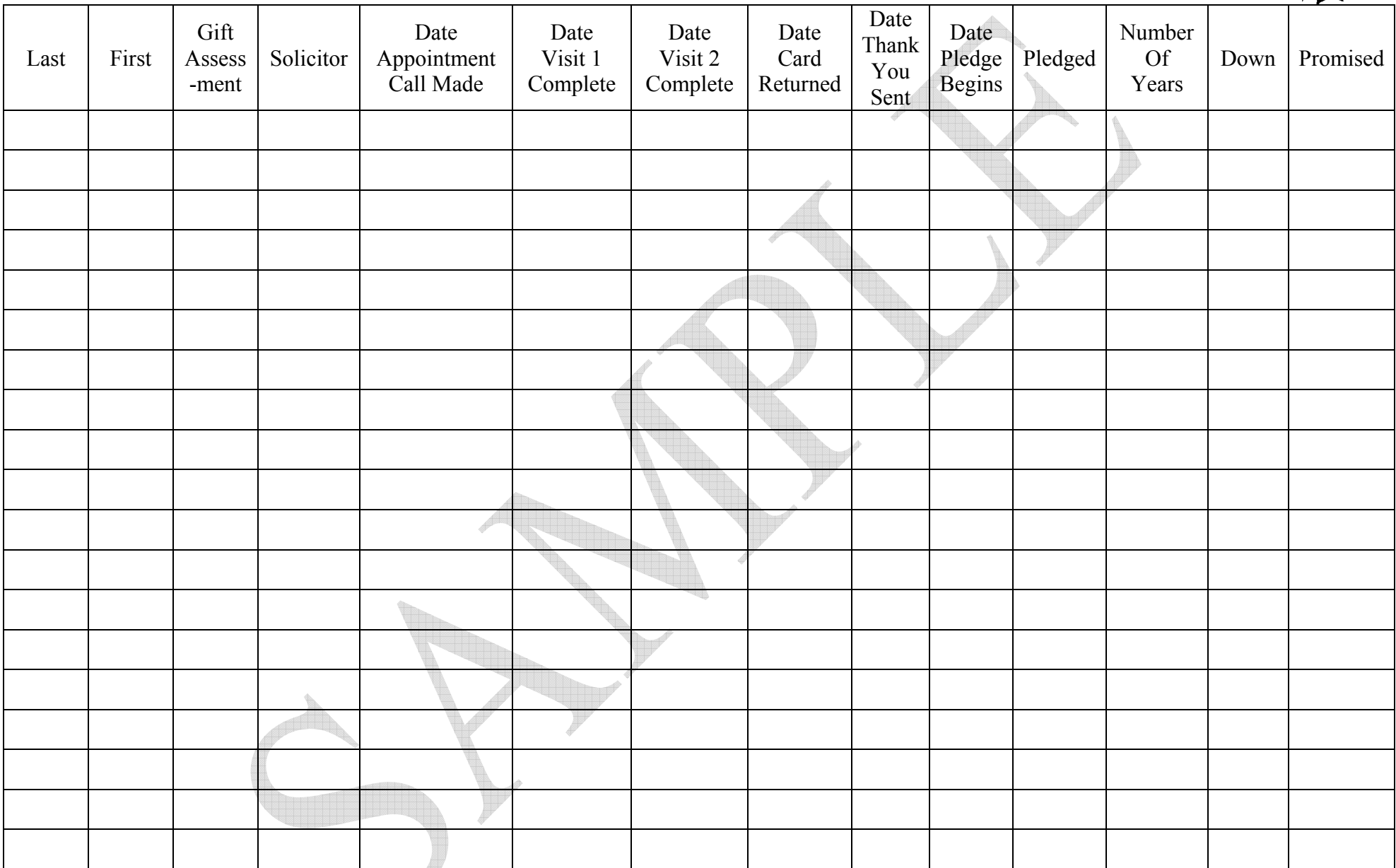
Sincerely,

(names)



Time: _____

PG Appendix F (Tracking Sheet)





Sample Handwritten Thank You Note for Pacesetter Visitors

Dear _____,

Thank you for welcoming me into your home and for allowing me the time to share with you about the (Name) Campaign. We will be successful because people like you believe that this is important for the future of our parish and arch/diocese for years to come.

May God continue to bless and guide you as you prayerfully consider your (families) expression of faithful stewardship.

God's best to you!

(Pacesetter Visitor)