

Diocese of Des Moines
Department of Stewardship



Guiding Principles of Generosity in a Crisis

With thanks to the International Catholic Stewardship Council Community Forum

These principles focus on the importance of continuous communication and engagement with parishioners, prudent adjustments to short-term stewardship and development plans, and commitment to staying the course. Of course, it is necessary for us to make adjustments as needed, but we never abandon asking for support. Our mission knows no day off!

In the spirit of support and encouragement, the stewardship office offers the best practices and strategies that can be used to support the spiritual and physical needs of our parish community:

- 1. Don't make assumptions regarding parishioners' giving ability.** Allow them to make their own decisions as to their level of giving. Our faith tells us that each of our parishioners has a spiritual need to give of their time, their unique abilities, and their financial resources. That spiritual need doesn't go away just because we are in a crisis. It may have to be adjusted, but we need to continue to ask for all three.
- 2. Despite the economic impact of the crisis, parishioners believe in the MISSION of the Church.** The mission revolves around a relationship with God and others. Continuing to provide opportunities for people to grow in their relationship with Jesus and service to others, will engage parishioners in the mission and allow them to share their gifts of time, talent, and treasure – meeting their own spiritual needs.
- 3. Move forward with a RICH CHURCH mentality, NOT a poor Church mentality.** Believe in abundance as Jesus tells us to do. We must work to overcome our parishioners' perception of scarcity.
- 4. Encourage parishioners to focus on gratitude because we still have so much for which to be thankful.** Spend time thanking parishioners. Let parishioners know we value them and care about them.
- 5. Talk about the impact of parishioners' giving.** Share info and briefings as appropriate (EX: "A faithful parishioner/donor just shared \$XXXX with us and we are using this generous gift to do XYZ.").
- 6. Increase communication with parishioners.** Keep them fully informed and deeply engaged. Use various communication methods – letters, newsletters, emails, phone calls, websites, podcasts, virtual briefings, etc.
- 7. We can't always control the circumstances we are placed in, but we can always work toward positive and creative responses to the challenges we face.** Strong leadership, creativity, flexibility, and resilience have helped our parishes persevere through challenging times.