

Capital campaigns and fundraisers in the stewardship way of life

May 18, 2022 | Policies

The Diocese of Jefferson City, in accordance with the diocesan Pastoral Plan, is implementing a pastoral effort to deepen the spirituality of stewardship in our diocese.

The Stewardship Way of Life recognizes the need for clergy and faithful alike to foster an intentional and co-responsible approach to discipleship under the Lord Jesus, answering the call to freely give of themselves to the mission of the Church and others out of gratitude and love for Christ. This Christian spirituality of stewardship is manifested concretely in the way Catholics support the ministry of their parishes, in the way parishes support the ministry of diocesan ministries, and in the way the diocese supports the ministry of the universal Church.

This biblically-based model of tithing, embraced at every level of the diocese, openly and transparently embodies our intentional response as disciples of our Lord.

In this model, the Sunday offertory collection shall be the primary means of funding the operations of the parish, as the parishioners are expected to fund their own mission (cf. c. 222). In addition, there are three diocesan special collections at Christmas, Easter and in July to fund the obligations we share together; the education of our seminarians and priests, our infirm and retired priests, and for the missions.

Parish special event fundraisers are to be limited in this tithing-based model in order to respect the parishioners' tithe to the parish as the primary means of supporting the mission of the parish. Otherwise, the proliferation of unapproved second collections or fundraisers will have the effect of eroding the intentional commitment of the parishioners in their annual stewardship pledge. Many present parish special events are billed as fundraisers but need not be, as they fulfill a social and community-building need in the parish. Serious consideration should be given to eliminating the fundraising aspect of these parish social events and emphasizing their community dimension.

Therefore, a special event fundraiser may take place no more than once a year in the parish and once a year for the parish school, and the funds generated must not be used to fund the regular operations of the parish or school. The proceeds of the fundraiser may be designated by the pastor to build a restricted parish fund or endowment, such as a deferred maintenance fund to off-set the need for future capital campaigns. In the case of the school, proceeds must be used for endowed funds or a special project, not operational expenses. The proceeds of this fundraising event will be considered extraordinary income and be geared toward assisting the parishioners to rounding out their biblically-based tithe (8% for the parish offertory; 2% for a charity of their choice).

Capital Campaigns

It is understood that from time-to-time parishes will need to undertake capital campaigns in order to accomplish major projects that expand the parish complex or significantly address critical issues beyond regular deferred maintenance and upkeep.

Capital Campaigns & Fundraisers in the Stewardship Model

It is critical that funds given and pledged to these capital campaigns not diminish or replace the pledged tithe of parishioners but should be presented to the parish as an opportunity to give “over and above” what is sacrificially given in and through a yearly tithing pledge to support the operations of the parish. For this reason, capital campaigns in the parish should be infrequent and may only begin with the Bishop’s written permission. Deferred Maintenance campaigns are discouraged, as the upkeep and repairs of facilities should be included in the regular operating budget of the parish. The diocesan policy governing deferred maintenance projects and campaigns must be followed, and any funds obtained for them are considered ordinary income and subject to the 10% tithe. In a well-run parish Deferred Maintenance campaigns will be rare and only the result of unusual and unforeseeable circumstances.

The construction or substantial expansion of a church, parish hall, school, or other parish facility may qualify as a Major Capital campaign and not a Deferred Maintenance campaign. Efforts to restore and beautify existing church structures undertaken to enrich the worship and faith of the parish may also qualify as a Major Capital campaign.

Major Capital Campaigns and the Tithe

Approved campaigns supporting projects of major expansion/beautification/restoration are required to tithe 5% of their campaign receipts to the diocese, in keeping with the spirituality of stewardship and the practice of sharing all our gifts. However, the pastor may apply for permission from the Bishop to divert some or all of their tithing proceeds from a Major Capital campaign to:

- One or more of the diocesan Special Collections (Christmas, Easter, Missions).
- A new diocesan fund to assist struggling parishes in the diocese who meet defined benchmarks of the practice of stewardship.
- Or any combination of the above.

As many campaigns combine elements of major expansion/beautification/restoration and deferred maintenance, the Bishop will determine the percentages of the tithe that will be considered Major Capital campaign and Deferred Maintenance campaign.