

Mythbusters: Stewardship Style!

A review of the ICSC Annual Conference presentation

The Catholic Church is one of the greatest forces for good in the world. Its schools, healthcare systems, and sanctuaries have provided a spiritual, educational, and healing home for billions of people across the globe throughout the millenia.

GP Catholic Services is committed to continuing to elevate philanthropy in the Catholic Church. And, as a follow-up to President and CEO Elizabeth Zeigler's recent presentation at the International Catholic Stewardship Council Annual Conference in Nashville, we're out to bust the myths that can inhibit your goals.

1

Myth: Stewardship is a transaction.

Fact: Stewardship is even more than volunteering for an hour or making a small donation online. A Catholic steward has gratitude, accountability, generosity, and a willingness to return God's gifts with increase.

2

Myth: Only the most devout Catholics give.

Fact: Though giving is correlated with Mass attendance, don't overlook those who attend irregularly. While 92% of frequent Mass attendees are part of a giving household, 20% of infrequent attendees are part of a giving household.

3

Myth: The less overhead, the better.

Fact: Praising development efforts for lean overhead numbers sends the wrong message to donors, Church leaders, and others: that running a lean effort is all that matters. It's a cyclical process - a high rate of staff turnover means that overall impact declines, which compromises effectiveness, which makes talented leaders avoid the sector, which does not propel your mission forward.

4

Myth: Only frontline fundraisers are fundraisers.

Fact: The more familiar a parishioner is with the solicitor, the greater likelihood they will make a gift. This means that the development officer shouldn't always make the ask. This means that a family member or friend, asking in person, could be a successful solicitor of funds.

5

Myth: Giving should take a stepladder approach.

Fact: Major gifts take time and investment, but also bold thinking and the courage to make a big ask early or outside of a campaign. Remember that a first ask can be a big ask, with proper cultivation.

6

Myth: The majority of philanthropic decisions are made by men.

Fact: 84% of philanthropic decisions are made or informed by women. In the United States, women control 51% of total personal wealth, and 45% of millionaires are women. Lastly, 40% of American households have a woman as the primary breadwinner.

GP Catholic Services, a division of Graham-Pelton Consulting, is a leading fundraising consulting firm serving the Catholic Church. Specializing in designing and managing fundraising campaigns for dioceses, schools, parishes, and religious orders, we offer decades of fundraising and development experience with a powerful focus on the Catholic Church.