

Five Ways You Can Increase Annual Support Now

As you may have noticed in the various webinars in the past month offered by professional fundraising firms, online giving platforms and fellow development professionals, there has been a consistent theme: Donors are looking for ways to be part of the force for good and assisting those in need. One of the ways donors have been making a difference is by giving **more** to their favorite charitable causes despite the economic climate. What can you do to tap into that philanthropic spirit to maintain or strengthen your mission? Below are five ways Catholic missions and ministries are finding success in increasing annual support now:



Stay in Contact with Donors

It is critically important to engage in dialog with donors **more** – not less. It may feel counterintuitive, in times of economic or social crisis, but it is the first of this list because it is something all of us can do. Your organization is a favorite of your major and loyal donors, likely for the vitality it brings to the faith and the qualities of services for those in need. If you take the time to check-in with donors on both how they are doing and report what your organization is doing, you will find appreciative feedback and, often, requests to you of what else the donor can do to help.



Monitor and Report on the Financial Status of Your Organization

Maintaining the regular schedule of informational e-blasts, newsletters and other ways you keep donors updated is important now more than ever. Within these vehicles, be sure to report on the financial condition of the organization. Parishes should be reporting weekly offertory. Schools should be reporting on tuition support, along with how they have engaged students during stay-at-home orders. Catholic ministerial charities should be reporting on the change in demand on the organization's resources. This is important, as often donors may not be aware of financial struggles until it is too late for your organization. You want to avoid donors later saying "I had no idea what it took to keep the mission going for the organization."



Encourage Easy Ways to Give Online and in a Recurring Way

Many Catholic parishes, schools and institutions rely on traditional ways for donors to support their cause: writing a check or providing a gift when onsite or through the mail. Rates of donors preferring to give online continues to climb each year. Be sure to offer online giving as an option on your website and that your website itself is mobile optimized (looks best when viewed from a smartphone). Make the donate/giving option prominent and visible from every page on your website. Most charities designate the top, right of their homepage and subpages with a donate button that stands out from other content.

Be sure to offer a recurring (such as automatic monthly) giving option. Nearly every online giving provider offers this option and are at the ready to help you set up the recurring feature for you – just give your provider a call!



Highlight Other Ways to Give Online

One of the wonderful changes in the philanthropic landscape in the 21st century is the diversity of ways to support charitable causes. Be sure to provide information online about other ways donors can support you, such as through appreciated stocks/bonds, Donor-Advised Funds and traditional IRA direct transfers (for donors 70 ½ or older), the Combined Federal Campaign (if you participate in CFC), potential donor employer matching gifts, and through gifts in a will. If you offer Charitable Gift Annuities, be sure to highlight to donors that there is a way to “make a gift that pays you guaranteed income” – a very attractive options in times of uncertainty.



Ask for Year-End Gifts Now

Many Catholic institutions have found success with reaching out to their strongest supporters this spring to ask for significant year-end gifts now. The logic behind this approach is that many of the most committed donors have the means and motivation to give now and will do so if asked. Many of these same donors have a likelihood of still making a year-end gift, and even if not, the support now can ensure your mission continues without interruption and reduces uncertainty of waiting until the end of the year to learn if these significant gifts come through to your organization.

If you would like resources and sample language to get started on these five ways to increase your annual support now, reach out to Joe Gillmer at gillmerj@adw.org or visit tnpa.org.