

# **Offertory Recovery Strategy**

*Surviving and Thriving During the Pandemic*

## **Offertory Response During the Pandemic**

- Analyzed parishes where offertory remained consistent to pre-pandemic levels or increased
- Nationally, on average, parish offertory is down 20-30% from last year
- Parishes which act can likely achieve their 2019 numbers
- Parishes which do not act will continue their current trend and likely end the fiscal year down 30-40% compared to 2019

**DISCIPLES  
IN MISSION**

**OFFERTORY TRENDS  
Compared to Prior Year**

	<u>Sep-20</u>	<u>Oct-20</u>
<b>Decrease 0 - 12%</b>	<b>33%</b>	<b>35%</b>
<b>Decrease 13 - 20%</b>	<b>19%</b>	<b>21%</b>
<b>Decrease 21% +</b>	<b>31%</b>	<b>31%</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>83%</b>	<b>86%</b>
<b>Increased</b>	<b>17%</b>	<b>14%</b>

## **Offertory Response During the Pandemic (Part 2)**

- Identify factors in common across a sample of parishes
  - What was done to be successful in the offertory
  - How did they do it
- Provide opportunity to share insights and best practices

## **Panel Discussion (1/5)**

- Tell us about the role of prayer for yourself and your team for your parish(es) during the pandemic.
- How did you engage and invite parishioners to be generous, or more generous, during the crisis?
  - What was the discernment process like for you in deciding how to act?

## **Panel Discussion (2/5)**

- What do you see as the relationship between discipleship and increased generosity?
- Who works with you in serving the pastoral needs of your parishioners?
- Who did you consult as you developed a strategy for your parish(es) to face the impact of the pandemic?

## **Panel Discussion (3/5)**

- What strategies did you chose and why?
- How different are these strategies from what you were doing before the pandemic?
- How has your strategy evolved over the course of the past few months?

## Panel Discussion (4/5)

- Let's talk about communications!
  - What was your main message to your parishioners at the beginning of the pandemic?
  - Did you have a communication plan specifically related to financial support? If so, what was it?
  - What forms of communication have you used to stay connected to your parishioners?



## **Panel Discussion (5/5)**

- What is one thing you would recommend to those listening who want to work on stabilizing their parish offertory?
- What do you feel was key for your parish(es) in surviving and thriving during this pandemic?
- What would you have done differently?

## **Parishioner Engagement – Sustained Presence**

- Rebuilding a sense of community that fits the situation and demonstrates to parishioners how the parish adds value to their lives
- Focusing on community-minded language and events, keeping the church buildings open for prayer, offering sacraments while following guidelines
- Continuing the mission regardless of the circumstances

## **Visibility to the Community**

- Activity visible to all outside the buildings and in the community
- Virtual programming for faith formation and sacramental preparation
- In person and online
  - Livestreamed Masses, Novenas, Rosaries, Prayer Services
  - On Facebook, YouTube, Parish Website, Local Community Access Media
  - With recordings available anytime

## **Continued Sacramental Life**

- Daily and Sunday Mass
- Adoration
- Confession
- Prayer Groups and Services
- Bible Studies

## **Service to the Community**

- Help parishioners pay bills
- Go grocery shopping for older parishioners
- Provide food pantry, gift card, or food prep assistance
- Ensure everyone feels safe by following all appropriate protocols and restrictions

## **Communication – Starting with the Pastor**

- Strong, positive, Christ-centered messaging from all parish leaders – especially priests and especially pastors – had the greatest effect on rallying the community

## **Communication – Continued Over Time**

- Phone calls from volunteers to check in with parishioners
  - Focused on the well being of parishioners and how the parish can be of assistance
  - Consider the phrase “The pastor asked me to give you a call”
- Various forms of communication
  - Pulpit announcements, the bulletin, the website, social media, e-communication, and written letters

## **Communication – Social Media Tools**

- Recorded messages on Facebook and parish websites
- Special events via Facebook Live
- Record and post parish events for all parishioners to see
- Regularly (at least weekly) video or e-mail messages to clarify messaging, protocols, and what is happening in the life of the parish



## **Tools to Address the Financial Challenge**

- Consistent and frequent messaging about giving
- Communications and marketing drive offertory
  - Regularly ask for financial support
  - Regularly mention and briefly explain parish finances
  - Extend personal invitations for feasible commitments
  - Provide monthly communications with ongoing parish needs
  - Ask for support despite difficult times, in terms of both money and volunteers
  - Be honest about the state of the parish finances

## **Successfully Addressing the Financial Challenge**

- Had a pastoral and financial plan
- Actively engaged parishioners
- Remained rooted in prayer
- Monitored offertory to note trends
- Maintained or increased online presence
- Regularly thanked donors

## **Financial Transparency**

- Share financial information
  - Publish offertory totals regularly
  - Report monthly on parish expenses and offertory
- Transparency about financial situation and needs
  - Leads to parishioner ownership of all the activity of the parish and excitement about what everyone in the parish can do together

## **Characteristics of a Pandemic Recovery Plan**

- Continue Sacramental Life and Mission-Oriented Activity
- Communicate
- Engage People and Resources
- Work towards a long-term cultural shift in how parishioners view giving to their parish

## **Next Steps**

- **Maintaining presence in the lives of your parishioners**
  - Developing a strong pandemic pastoral strategy
- **Communicate & Outreach**
  - Developing a communications plan
  - Talk about Mission and talk about offertory
  - Digital Fundraising
- **Identifying Resource needs**
  - Modernize parish approach using social media tools

## **Contact your regional consultants**

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