

BMF-gram



Volume 10, Number 1 Business Managers' Forum - Diocese of Rockville Centre June, 2009
An Association of Business Managers, Facility Managers, Accounting and Other Parish Administrators

Automated Giving: A Sign of the Times

Laurie Whitfield, Director
Office of Parish Stewardship, DRVC

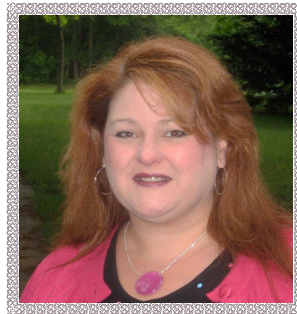
Automated Giving for the parish offertory seems to be a topic that is always simmering. It is time, once again, to turn the heat up! The Office of Parish Stewardship has been encouraging and helping parish leaders take the step in offering automated giving as an option for parish collections for over eight years now.

We have offered many workshops and information sessions in this diocese and elsewhere during that time and have also developed a parish planning tool. This tool has been recognized by the International Catholic Stewardship Council and is being used world-wide to help parishes begin the process. As parish leaders, we ask parishioners to commit to a financial plan; automating our collections is a wise and practical tool to help them live out their commitment.

The years and experience of our parishes have shown that automated giving is a valid and beneficial option for both our parishes and our parishioners. In short, it's a "win-win!"

Some Benefits to Parishioners:

- An easier and more responsible way to live out their financial stewardship commitment by keeping it a priority.
- No need to search for envelopes or the checkbook on Sunday morning!
- No need to "make-up" for vacation or other 'out of town' Sundays.
- Peace of mind.



Some Benefits to the Parishes:

- Assisting parishioners with their financial stewardship commitment.
- A more reliable revenue stream.
- Processing weekly collections will become less time consuming.
- Minimizes cash in the parish and allows for immediate availability of funds.
- Statistically, automated givers-give more.

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Church using Gifts
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Business Managers' Forum

Officers...

President 516-746-6585
Deacon Bob O'Donovan
St. Aidan, Williston Park

Vice President
James Vanella 631-499-8520
St. Matthew, Dix Hills

Secretary 631-584-5454 x202
Robert J. Balla
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From the BMF President



Dear Members and Visitors to the Business Managers' Forum,

Welcome to the final scheduled meeting and publication for Spring 2009. This year has been both challenging and exciting. The BMF Executive Board and I have been so excited and pleased by your response to our "Roundtable" portion of our last meeting. I have received no less than twenty positive responses to the information sharing / the methodology of the meeting / and responses as to how to implement the findings.

Thank you, thank you, thank you!!!!!!

We will spend some time in our next Executive Board meeting and then in our June 11th General Meeting as to how best to address the "Enormous and incredible book of knowledge that resides in so many of our colleagues within many of our entities." Our future as being resources to each other should pay us many dividends as we go forth especially existing in a tightening economy. Based upon your requests, we are responding with a very important meeting totally dedicated to Automated Giving. Look and see how we are addressing these needs and concerns at our next meeting!

Date: **June 11, 2009**

Time: 1:00 pm to 3:30 pm (*note special time!*)

Location: St. Matthew Church,
35 N. Service Road, Dix Hills NY

**Topic: Presentations by three of the top
"Automated Giving" organizations:
Faith Direct, NetCharge, and ParishPay**

Format: Each organization has been provided with a questionnaire to complete that will be shared with all attendees. Each organization will be given a 40 minute slot for presentation and Q. & A.

I take this time to encourage every Business Manager, every Pastor, every Stewardship Director to take the time from your busy and hectic schedules and receive the most concise and to the point presentation as to how "Automated Giving" may or may not be an answer to your giving needs. It is our opinion that this June 11th meeting, formatted to fit your specific needs, will provide all that you need to make an informed and profitable decision.

Just as we spoke about at our last BMF meeting, let us all make every effort to come together, listen, ask questions and share experiences. This should help lead all of us to the best decision for each of our entities! Be there or be square!

"Parishes, too, must be, or become, true communities of faith within which this Christian way of life (Stewardship) is learned and practiced. Sound business practice is a fundamental of good stewardship, and stewardship as it relates to church finances must include the most stringent ethical, legal, and fiscal standards."

(from the U.S. Bishops' Pastoral letter:
Stewardship a Disciple's Response)

Deacon Bob (continued)

June 11th!
Saint Matthew's Church.
Special "2 ½" hour meeting

Let us learn, share and work together.

Please mark your calendars right now, don't wait, and plan to be at the Business Managers' Forum Meeting on Thursday, June 11th 2009 at 1:00 PM at our new hospitable host location at St. Matthew's in Dix Hills. We look forward to seeing you all there.

Have you made your commitment to come yet?

Pax Christi, Deacon Bob O'Donovan

BMF-gram

If you'd like to contribute to this newsletter, please contact Rob C. @ 516-334-0021 x136. For distribution matters, contact Florence T. @ 631-585-8760.

Notes from Our Last Meeting

April 23, 2009

Deacon Bob O'Donovan opened the meeting with a prayer.

Ellen Caravella discussed the current budget process. She stressed the importance of using a realistic approach when budgeting. She urged everyone to visit the DRVC website – Internal Audit, to access budget forms. Ellen also suggested viewing the Diocesan Bulletin Board for Logos training and Macola schedules, deadlines, etc.

The diocesan budget assumptions were briefly discussed. We should use "parish specific budgeting information" such as reduced collections when estimating income for the coming fiscal year. Individual parish statistics should be considered when preparing your budget.....Religious Education fees, visiting priests scheduled, fund raising activities, maintenance schedules, etc. etc. Remember that insurance rates increase in January so that the current rates should be used for the first four months of the next fiscal year (Sept. through Dec.).

When estimating your parish collections for the present year, remember to subtract the extra Sunday of 8/31/2008 that resulted in 53 Sundays last year compared to the 52 Sundays that occur in most years.

If you

receive this BMF-gram in the snail-mail and do not receive it electronically, then that means we do not have your e-mail address. Please sit down, might I suggest right now as you are thinking of it, and send an e-mail to **dcbob@staidanparish.org** and ask Deacon Bob to add you to the BMF electronic mail list.

Thank you for helping us help you!



A roundtable group discussion took place during the second half of the meeting. The purpose was to learn what steps were being taken by various parishes in order to soften the blow of the current economic crisis.

Some parishes have reduced the size of their bulletins. Others have changed the frequency of mailing envelopes to parishioners. Many have reviewed their banking relationships to see if another bank could better meet their needs with fewer bank fees, better service, etc. A lengthy discussion regarding banks disclosed that although banks differ considerably in their charges and services, an important factor was having a good relationship with your particular branch and its manager.

Automated giving was also mentioned as a means of improving collections. There were some differences of opinion as to their impact on collections although some parishes have had considerable increases due to implementing such a program. The next meeting of the BMF will include presentations by three different Automated Giving Organizations. All parishes were urged to have their pastor or parish administrator attend this very important meeting.

Submitted by Bob Balla

Continued from Page 1

- A savings on collection envelope expense.
- Significant increases from only a few families enrolled.

Also, time and experience have disproven some of the obstacles like “we have an older parish, they won’t do it” or “then people won’t come to Mass” or “we are encouraging credit card debt.” Statistics show that these arguments are simply not true.



...time and experience have disproven some of the obstacles (to automated giving)...these arguments are simply not true.

At this point, the question is not, “should we or shouldn’t we offer automated giving as an option?” (The answer is simply a resounding “YES!”) The question now is “how do we get started?”

First, download the resource “Developing a Parish Plan for Automated Giving” from our website at www.stewardship.org/lead.html or call our Office for a copy at 516-379-4055 x3. We are also available to come and speak with your parish, finance or stewardship council on the topic.

Next, attend a workshop on automated giving. This month (June 11) the Business Managers’

Forum is dedicating an entire meeting to exploring not only the topic, but third party vendors as well. There will be a useful comparison sheet distributed that is a “*must have*” for all parishes. Vendors will be on hand to present and answer questions.

Automated giving is, currently, an option just as writing a check is an option. Responsible stewardship teaches us that we, as parish leaders, must meet people where they are at

in today’s world. We ask people to give financially of their “first fruits.” At one time people were “paid” in livestock, grain or wheat; then cash and checks. Where are many people ‘at’ now? They are automated.

As a Church, we must continually be attentive to the signs of the times; whether it is by offering new ministries or rethinking the amount of time required to participate in ministry; by looking at Mass schedules and working with our town’s athletic schedules or by offering an easier way to give. We must recognize that automated giving is not the future of giving... *it is now.*

BMF

Our Next Meeting...

Thursday, June 11, 2009

SPECIAL TIME: 1 pm to 3:30 pm

Automated Giving Presentations and Information:

ParishPay, Faith Direct, NetCharge

Upcoming Meetings and Proposed Topics

Sep 17

Catholic Purchasing Services
Pay Force and Benefits - John Coughlin

Nov. 19

General Counsel - Tom Renker
Roundtable Discussion

*Mark Your Calendar - all held at St. Matthew's in Dix Hills (35 N. Service Road)
Regular meeting times: 1 pm to 3 pm*

Have you sent in your



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