

BRINGING OUR GIFTS TO THE TABLE: CREATING CONDITIONS FOR FINANCIAL HEALTH IN THE CHURCH

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LAYING THE FOUNDATION FOR SUCCESSFUL FUNDRAISING

Panel

Kerry A. Robinson (Moderator)

Michael Hoffman

Rev. Edward Malloy

Kerry A. Robinson

Permit me to offer a few reflections on a subject about which I have unwittingly and gratefully become passionate. I've spent my entire adult life in the world of formal Catholic philanthropy through my membership in the Raskob Foundation for Catholic Activities and FADICA. For nine recent years, I served as director of development for Saint Thomas More, the Catholic Chapel and Center at Yale University. That experience changed the course of my life and in many ways prepared me to appreciate the potential the Leadership Roundtable has to transform the Catholic Church in the United States.

I've been surprised at how mysterious philanthropy seems to fundraisers, and fundraising seems to philanthropists. Indeed, I've long advocated for internships and experience in both realms to foster a better understanding of each. I believe that fundraising for the Catholic Church is fundamentally about vision and confidence and passion, and bringing those qualities to bear on developing a faith-filled, expansive ministry.



Kerry Robinson

Money follows mission. . . . Keep in mind that donors are subjects, not objects.

Money follows mission. And fundraising is successful when the vision is compelling and the program aspires to be comprehensive, excellent, and always open to creative new initiatives. Keep in mind that donors are subjects, not objects. They are members of our faith community who contribute more than money, and have the right to be engaged in a successful expansion of ministry. As Frank Butler said in his keynote address, “Everyone counts.”

If you want to be successful at raising money, here are some lessons I’ve learned over the years:

- Be a ministry, parish, diocese, or organization worthy of generosity.
- Be transparent, accountable, grateful, and trustworthy.
- Understand that donors are sophisticated investors, but also capable of ever-increasing levels of commitment, engagement, and generosity.
- Alter your perception of fundraising so you see it as a ministry, as a means for evangelization, and as a constitutive responsibility as members of this faith community.
- Commit to heart that people invest in relationships, in competencies, and in success.
- Never be stagnant; always be receptive to change.
- Discomfort with fundraising—or even talking about money—is no longer an acceptable excuse for anyone who cares about their ministry.
- Resist cynicism and negativity in all its insidious forms.
- Be joyful and hopeful, and have confidence in the future, as people of faith, who trust in providence, are called to be.

Remember, finally, that nothing succeeds like success. Hold up your ministry, celebrate it, do everything possible to ensure it is excellent, well-managed, financially transparent, accountable, and just. Once you’ve achieved this mission, I can assure you the money will follow.

Michael Hoffman

By way of introduction, I am the founder, chairman, and CEO of Changing Our World, a leading philanthropic services consulting firm. Changing Our World specializes in major gift and capital campaigns, fundraising, capacity building for nonprofits, and corporate and private philanthropy. Our clients include the Archdiocese for the Military Services, the Archdiocese of New York, the Archdiocese of Boston, the Saint Vincent Catholic Medical Centers, and the Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center.

I'd like to describe for you three case studies that I believe illustrate some of the essential elements for successful fundraising today. Common to each of these cases, as you'll see, are:

- leadership, hard work, and a positive attitude;
- financial transparency; and
- a strong, strategic case for financial support.



Michael Hoffman

The first case involves the Twin Towers Fund, which Mayor Giuliani of New York set up to assist the families of uniformed rescue workers who lost their lives on 9/11. The mayor asked our firm to work on the Fund pro bono, which we did for two years. Because of Mayor Giuliani's leadership, the clear focus of the Fund, and his passion for complete transparency, over \$216 million was raised from 200,000 donors around the world, and distributed flawlessly.

First, don't be afraid to ask for assistance.

The second case takes us back to the fall of 2005, when I gave a talk to the Archdiocese of New York's Association of School Development Professionals. In my talk, "Successful Fundraising in Today's Changing World," I emphasized the importance of financial controls and financial transparency, particularly good strategic planning. I also pointed out that Catholics today want to support their local parishes and schools, but first they want to know where the money is going, and they want to know that it's being spent strategically. I ended my talk by telling the many elementary and high school principals and development directors in the room that people are available to help them with their fundraising. The catch is this: they have to take the initiative and ask for it.

The third case involves the Archdiocese of Boston, which asked our company about a year ago to work with it on a philanthropic strategic plan, and to ensure that this plan supported additional work the archdiocese had undertaken on a financial strategic plan and a schools strategic plan. Not only are these plans interconnected, but they share a common trait: very strong and influential volunteer leadership. As for the philanthropic report that we are currently implementing, two key recommendations are:

- The archdiocese must build a coordinated but decentralized fundraising/philanthropy operation that is based on influence and trust.
- The archdiocese and its various entities must have access to and share world-class resources.

There are several overarching lessons I believe we can learn from these three cases. First, don't be afraid to ask for assistance. People want to help. Second, leadership, hard work, and positive attitude are essential to your fundraising endeavor. And finally, a strong strategic case based on financial transparency is pivotal to any successful effort.

Rev. Edward Malloy

With the help of anecdotal bits and pieces, I'd like to talk about the role that leadership can play in both mobilizing personnel resources for fundraising and in appropriately celebrating and thanking those who have been generous to the institution.

But to say that I raised the money would be foolish . . .

In the course of my professional responsibilities with Notre Dame, I was involved in one way or another with raising about \$1.5 billion. I was understandably delighted that we achieved those results. But to say that I raised the money would be foolish, because I was surrounded by and worked with some very talented, energetic, and committed people. So, in a sense, one of my responsibilities was to make sure that we had theorized properly about how to be effective in fundraising, that we had put together the right kind of staff to make it happen, and that we were tending to the thanking and celebration functions with as much enthusiasm for the thousand-dollar benefactor as for the multi-million-dollar benefactor.

In the field of higher education fundraising, the dynamics are such that momentum builds, research gets done, and successful fundraising begets more successful fundraising, especially if it looks as though the money is being used for good purposes. The key question in much of Church-related fundraising is, how do you get that momentum going? It seems to me that in a lot of Church settings, because of the limitations of personnel and the means for large-scale fundraising, outside expertise will have to be brought in, just as you do for other activities within the diocese. And although it would be unusual, based on my experience, for multiple dioceses to try to raise money together, if a diocese is quite small, I see no reason why it couldn't coordinate that function with neighboring dioceses, or even with regions of dioceses. It's an idea certainly worth further reflection.



Father Edward "Monk" Malloy

I've often been asked in interviews what percentage of my time is spent on fundraising. My answer is: "On one hand, very little, but on the other hand, most of my time." That's because almost everything I did in that role was connected in some way to effective fundraising, even if actual focused events comprised a much smaller portion of my time. I think that should be true at the diocesan and parish levels as well. We need to be comfortable with the task, even if it doesn't come to us naturally. Our skills can be refined through both hard work and outside expertise.

It's not a burden...it's an opportunity.

There is no shortage of opportunities for us to pursue as fundraisers. Many of the people I know who are very, very wealthy would love to leave their mark. And many of them are committed Catholics who believe deeply in what we're trying to do. They truly want to support the Church. We simply have to find the most effective ways to reach them, and be willing to commit ourselves to the task with great enthusiasm, learning from other institutions that have known a level of success in fundraising. It's not a burden...it's an opportunity.

Plenary Discussion Highlights

Q. Are there any new and innovative fundraising techniques the Church could use to get beyond the "80/20" principle, where 80 percent of the gifts come from 20 percent of the people?

Michael Hoffman

A lot of people are now making their gifts online, as we saw following the tragedies of 9/11, the tsunami, and Katrina. For many of these individuals, it was the first time they had ever made a charitable contribution to anything other than their church. Because they're new givers, the issues of how professionally they're handled and how sincerely they're thanked will determine whether they remain givers.

The challenge for all of us is that there's a tremendous number of young Catholics who are either wealthy or going to be wealthy. They may be totally focused now on their jobs and their families, and may not even go to Church. Nonetheless, we have to make a conscious effort to find them and get them to become active in the Church, to join our boards and committees, for example. We then have to educate them about the gift of philanthropy.

Q. You talked about wealthy people wanting to leave their mark. Has the Church progressed to the point where it's able to speak to these people about the responsible use of this wealth?

Rev. Malloy

My experience has been that there are people who look to me, and others like me, to help them think about what they can do with the wealth they've accumulated—whether it's inherited, earned, or they happened to get lucky in life. Think of all the ways they could squander that money. Our objective is to tap into their desire to make a difference so they see the outcome for themselves.

Q. Can you expand on the importance of not just cultivating gifts, but also recognizing and celebrating them?

Rev. Malloy

Those of us in the higher education community have what you might call a *cycle of thanking*. If you have people at a certain level of giving, or people who make annual unrestricted gifts, it's an excellent idea to bring them together once a year, perhaps at a dinner, to thank them formally. They often feel good being in the company of others who believe in the same things they do. It reinforces for the future. If somebody gives a much smaller gift, how do you thank them? Sometimes it's just a letter or a handshake or some other form of special recognition. The thing to remember is that if you get to the point where you stop thanking people because their gift is not big enough, then I think you've lost the integrity of the whole process.

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Q. How can the Roundtable help the Church with its fundraising effort?

Rev. Malloy

The Catholic community needs world-class talent when it comes to fundraising and philanthropy. So I think the Roundtable can help by putting together a cadre of such talent—perhaps in the form of a special committee whose resources people within the Church could share.