

## Tenets 11-21 of Orthodox Fundraising

How is Orthodox fundraising any different from the scads of fundraising efforts we observe in the world around us? Orthodox fundraising must be guided by two important considerations: 1) the ultimate purpose of the request for a gift or increased giving and 2) the Orthodox understanding of personhood.

Though the purpose may appear to be rather mundane - "help us to meet our operating budget" - ultimately, the true purpose of parish life is sanctifying the life of the world. "Help us to minister to the poor and the suffering" - "Help us offer the deep Paschal joy that is the foundation of spiritual life in the Orthodox church to others" - "Help us give to others what has been so generously given to us - the fullness of the Holy Spirit that dwells within the church" - "Help us to "Train up a child in the way he should go; so when he is old he will not depart from it." (Proverbs 22:6)

God is a Person, or more particularly, three Persons in complete harmony and unity - Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Every human person is created in the image and likeness of God. C.S. Lewis wrote that the second most holy thing one will ever encounter in life, after the Holy Eucharist, is another person. People must be approached respectfully and humbly accepting how precious and important this person is to God and how they themselves manifest God. We would never be disrespectful to an icon because they are "pointers" to God or "little epiphanies" of God. And since people are the real icons, we must always approach them with far greater respect and regard.

Use these tenets when training the members of the stewardship committee, a capital campaign fundraising team or the parish council. Don't try to do them all in one session. It can be a little overwhelming. Select a few for open discussion as a teaching tool for 5-10 minutes at each meeting.

Suggested discussion questions:

How is this tenet related to the teachings of Our Lord?

Does anyone have a personal experience to share that relates to this aphorism?

Does anyone feel that this tenet is contrary to the gospel? How so?

Do we practice these tenets in our parish fundraising?

Most of these tenets are about personal conversations with possible contributors. What has been our experience with this or have we been taking the easy way out with mailings only?

Is personally speaking with another person about their giving appropriate for the priest?

Are any of these points applicable beyond fundraising in terms of our relationships with others?

What practical and useful steps might be helpful before visiting with someone about meaningful giving?

### **Tenets 11-20**

11. Listen carefully. Help the person you are speaking with to feel the power of a project or program to effect positive change.

12. Practice the “Rule of Threes”. Find ways to thank a person three times for their gift. This one really works. The results are astounding.

13. Exciting and daring programs bring gifts. Programs should be bold, but not controversial.

14. Those who give to annual campaigns or stewardship are the best candidates to give to special, capital and planned giving opportunities.

15. Men and women are much less likely to give to a parish – no matter how exciting and tantalizing the new project might be – if it has problems with leadership or management.

16. The mission of the parish is of primary, overriding, and paramount significance. Nothing else is as important. No matter how appealing the specific program or project may seem, no incentive to give is as powerful as an abiding and compelling belief in the mission of the parish.

17. Many tenets are important. The most important of these is you must ask for the gift.

18. People do not give to projects or programs. They give to *people* with projects or programs.

19. The principal reason that people do not give is that they are not personally asked to give.

20. Rarely do we know the donor's real interests. However, if we ask and we listen carefully, he or she will tell us.