



Resources for Co-Responsibility and Ethical Financial Management in the Church

March 8 and 10, 2021

Introduction and Context

In February 2020, Leadership Roundtable hosted the **Catholic Partnership Summit**, which gathered Catholic leaders to address the most pressing Church leadership and management challenges and opportunities of our times. During our Summit, leaders helped identify the current financial crisis facing our Church and set forth recommendations to build ethical financial practices within the Church.

From the presentations and discussions at the Summit, **two key areas of immediate focus emerged:**

- Empowering diocesan finance councils through providing clarity about their roles and responsibilities and supporting them as they implement best practices, select and orient new members, and conduct business.
- Creating structures and laws for ethical financial leaders, similar to the universal law Vos Estis Lux Mundi and the U.S. Dallas Charter & Essential Norms, such as common financial and accounting protocols, compliance standards, audits, reporting, and training that could be enacted through a lay association of chairpersons of diocesan financial councils.

In April and May 2020, Leadership Roundtable hosted a two-part **COVID-19 Leadership Summit**, which gathered senior leaders from vital ministries of the U.S. Church to share their unique perspectives on the pandemic, and to collaborate for solutions to emerging needs.

From these convenings, **two relevant areas for action surfaced:**

- Addressing the financial crisis faced by parishes, dioceses, Catholic organizations and national collections accelerated by the COVID-19 pandemic and the lack of thought and promotion of contemporary giving practices and digital tools. A partnership was formed with #iGiveCatholic to quickly provide this resource to parishes and organizations that needed it.
- Strengthening the Church's financial situation through an urgent, collaborative response to crises that provides access to capital and creates a robust repository for funding essential services in the Church. This aims to address the urgent, intermediate and long-term financial needs of the Church.

Select Resources

Co-responsible and ethical financial management includes everything from active finance councils and transparent donor communications to independent audits. The resources below represent a sample of the best practices available to our Church today and offer a selection of materials to review according to your areas of interest.

Financial Practices

[Leadership Roundtable: “A Culture of Ethical Financial Management and Stewardship”](#)

An excerpt from the 2020 Catholic Partnership Summit report featuring the session on financial management and resulting recommendations.

[USCCB Ad Hoc Committee on Diocesan Audits: Report to the Body of Bishops](#)

A report on how internal or external reviews and audits of parishes would enhance the transparency and accountability of Church finances and the good stewardship of pastors and administrators.

[USCCB Committee on Budget and Finance: Diocesan Financial Issues](#)

A Manual published as an aide to Diocesan Financial Officers, Religious Treasurers and other personnel responsible for the financial administration of dioceses and religious institutions.

[USCCB: Socially Responsible Investment Guidelines](#)

A document providing dioceses and other Catholic institutions with guidance on exercising faithful, competent and socially responsible stewardship in how they manage and invest their financial resources.

[Diocesan Fiscal Management Conference: “Diocesan Financial Management: A Guide to Best Practices”](#)

A comprehensive manual for dioceses and religious institutions to ensure they are operating by best practices.

Parish Finances

[Leadership Roundtable: “Catholic Standards for Excellence,” Best Church Management Practices for Dioceses and Parishes](#)

A comprehensive listing of best practices for parishes and dioceses in areas such as management, advisory councils, finances, human resources, fundraising, and communications.

[Michael J. Castrilli and Charles E. Zech: “Parish Finances: Best Practices in Church Management”](#)

A guide for parishes to ensure they are operating with effective, accountable, and transparent financial processes.

Stewardship and Financial Resources

[Leadership Roundtable: A Case for Strengthening Church Resources](#)

A concept paper exploring a channel to provide both immediate financial relief from COVID-19 and future crises.

[USCCB: “Stewardship: A Disciple’s Response, A Pastoral Letter on Stewardship” & LPI’s summary “Stewardship: A Disciple’s Response in a Nutshell”](#)

A pastoral letter from the U.S. bishops on stewardship that also includes a summary, resource manual, and stewardship resources.

[Wilmington Trust: Catholic Foundation Trends](#)

A high-level overview of trends among Catholic foundations.

Financial Landscape

[Associated Press: Catholic Church lobbied for taxpayer funds, got \\$1.4B \(July 2020\)](#)

A report on how Congress expanded the rules for accessing funding through the Small Business Administration in 2020 and many Catholic dioceses and organizations applied for aid.

[The Washington Post: Catholic parishioners gave more money to churches that went online during quarantine than those that did not \(December 2020\)](#)

An investigation into the impact of the COVID-19 shutdowns on giving at Catholic parishes in the United States.

[Associated Press: Sitting on billions, Catholic diocese amassed taxpayer aid \(February 2021\)](#)

An investigation into the finances of the Catholic dioceses that received COVID relief aid that claimed the Church received billions in aid while sitting on \$10 billion in available funds.

[Catholic News Service \(America Magazine\): Catholic dioceses dispute AP Report on COVID relief funding \(February 2021\)](#)

A report on the response of Catholic leaders and finance experts to the February AP investigation, outlining the many flaws in the reporting and providing needed context.