



The Role of Development in Religious Institutes
Sr. Georgette Lehmoth, OSF, President of NCDC (1968-2019)
(glehmuth@tnpa.org)

Leaders are entrusted with the stewardship of the mission of their religious institutes. This mission is realized in the institutions the congregation sponsors and the projects, programs and ministries in which the institute invests its resources. Most clearly, mission is lived and experienced by others in the person of each of the institute's members.

Mission for each religious institute is the specific way its members are called forth to live, proclaim and engage others in the Gospel.

The purpose of development is to proclaim, engage and invite others to participation in the mission. Development is about advancing the mission and finding partners to support the efforts of the congregation that are done for the sake of the mission. Therefore, development is about relationships as well. Henri Nouwen put it this way:

Those who need money and those who can give money meet on the common ground of God's love. Asking people for money is giving them the opportunity to put their resources at the disposal of the Kingdom.

Development is not an adjunct to good works of the institute. It is a good work of the institute. It is a form of ministry and as so it can be "as spiritual as giving a sermon, entering a time of prayer, visiting the sick or feeding the hungry." (Nouwen)

Leaders of religious institutes can do the following in terms of congregational development:

- Recognize that development is a form of ministry and invite the membership to participate in this ministry for the sake of the mission
- Recognize that development is about relationship and that leaders have an important role in nurturing these relationships and inviting others to engagement and support of the mission
- Include the development director in congregational plans so that he/she can clearly articulate the institute's focus and direction
- Require a development plan, budget and annual goals upon which leadership and development mutually agree
- Meet with the development director on a regular basis
- Assure that a gift acceptance policy is in place and used
- Insure collaboration between various congregational offices such as development, finance, and communications by creating clear guidelines and procedures according to best practice
- Expect accountability to the institute as well as to the donors
- Understand and respect donors' right and development ethics
- Require on-going education to promote best practice

Resources available:

- [The Theology of Fundraising](#) by Archbishop Thomas Murphy (CDC)
- [The Spirituality of Fundraising](#) by Henri Nouwen (www.HenriNouwen.org)
- NCDC Code of Stewardship and Ethics (CDC)
- Donor Bill of Rights (CDC)
- [A Call to Accountability: Development for Mission](#) (CDC)

CDC-Leading the Catholic community in the ministry of ethical fundraising