

Funding Church Life: Challenges and Opportunities for Fundraising in the Catholic Church

Insights from the Case of *Missio Munich*

by Alexandra Fischer

Amidst a period of ecclesial transition, this article contends that Catholic fundraising is both a strategic and theological endeavor. It highlights the current challenges facing church fundraising, as well as the opportunities and strategic responses available. By examining *missio Munich* as a case study, the article connects identity and mission to fundraising practice and proposes concrete responses: fostering organizational readiness, leveraging the unique strengths of Catholic fundraising, and exploring innovative models and future perspectives. Ultimately, it concludes that mission-driven fundraising can serve as a credible witness to the Church's purpose.

1. Introduction: The Catholic Church in Transition – Challenges and the Role of Fundraising

The Roman Catholic Church in Germany faces profound challenges as declining membership, increasing numbers of church departures, and growing public distrust erode its traditional sources of income. Ensuring the church's long-term financial sustainability – and its continued capacity to provide pastoral care, education, and social services – will increasingly require the adoption of innovative and ethically grounded financial models.

In response to these evolving circumstances, this article examines the increasing significance of fundraising as a strategic, mission-driven approach to ensuring the Catholic Church's financial resilience – particularly in Germany, where secularization and demographic shifts are especially acute. Drawing on the author's academic expertise in fundraising management and extensive professional experience, notably at *missio Munich* (one of the two German branches of the *Pontifical Mission Societies*), the discussion highlights the vital role fundraising plays in sustaining and expanding the church's work. Rather than delving into the historical or theological underpinnings of religious fundraising, the article focuses on the practical opportunities available to the church today. To illustrate how these opportunities and challenges manifest in practice, the following section presents the case of *missio Munich* and explores how fundraising supports its ongoing mission.

2. Missio Munich – Identity, Mission, and the Need for Fundraising

Missio Munich is an integral part of the international Catholic missionary network, focusing on supporting local churches in Africa, Asia, and Oceania. As a key member of the global community of *Pontifical Mission Societies*, *missio Munich* embraces a dual mandate: providing financial assistance and pastoral partnership to dioceses in need, while also fostering missionary awareness and engagement within Germany. Central to this mission is the cultivation of a ‘community of solidarity’ through learning, prayer, education, and public outreach.

The work of *missio Munich* is deeply rooted in the conviction that the Gospel has the power to transform lives and communities – not only through material support, but also by nurturing mutual understanding and a sense of global responsibility. In this way, *missio Munich* serves as a bridge between local and global Church communities, enabling sustainable development and reinforcing the shared mission of the Catholic Church in a rapidly changing world.¹

It is part of MARMICK, a strategic network of major German Catholic charities, including *Misereor*, *Adveniat*, *Renovabis*, *Missio Aachen*, *Caritas International*, and *Kindermissionswerk ‘Die Sternsinger’*. By aligning their mandates and capacities, coordinating national and thematic strategies, and co-financing selected programs while avoiding duplication, they collectively enhance the overall effectiveness and impact of their work.² Across these organizations, donations constitute anywhere from 24% to as much as 98% of total income, underscoring their essential role in sustaining each mission.³ This illustrates how Catholic charities rely heavily on donations to fulfill their missions. Since donations comprise as much as 98% of the total income, fundraising stands not as a mere auxiliary, but as the foundation of sustainability and impact. To ensure ongoing global solidarity, it is imperative for these organizations to continually strengthen and innovate their fundraising strategies.

The origins of *missio Munich* can be traced back to 1838, a time when Europe was experiencing a surge of interest in foreign cultures and missionary engagement. Across the continent, numerous missionary societies emerged – often independently – united by the common goal of supporting missionaries through prayer and financial aid. In Bavaria, the missionary spirit found a strong advocate in King Ludwig I, who initiated the founding of the *Ludwig Missionsverein* in Munich in 1838. This association gained official recognition as a public corporation in 1862. A pivotal moment arrived in 1922, when Pope Pius XI relocated the headquarters of the *Society for the Propagation of the Faith* – the most influential precursor to the *Pontifical Mission Societies* – from Lyon to Rome. That same year, the *Ludwig Missionsverein* was integrated into the international structure, becoming the *Pontifical Mission Society in Bavaria*. The very roots of the *Pontifical Mission Societies* reach

¹ Cf. www.missio.com/english [accessed: January 26, 2026].

² Cf. www.kindermissionswerk.org/ueber-uns/netzwerke-und-mitgliedschaften [accessed: January 26, 2026].

³ Cf. *Sekretariat der Deutschen Bischofskonferenz*, *Katholische Kirche in Deutschland. Zahlen und Fakten 2021/22*, o. O. 2023, 49; cf. www.dbk-shop.de [accessed: January 26, 2026].

back to Blessed Pauline Jaricot, who, inspired by her deep faith and commitment to mission, founded the *Society for the Propagation of the Faith* in Lyons in 1822. She pioneered a grassroots fundraising network built on small, regular donations paired with daily prayer. In 1926, Pope Pius XI also introduced *World Mission Sunday*, still an important campaign for *missio Munich* today. This global day of prayer and solidarity for the missions is observed each year on the penultimate Sunday of October, while in Germany it is commemorated on the final Sunday of that month. Since 1972, the organization has officially operated under the name *missio – Internationales Katholisches Missionswerk Ludwig Missionsverein KdöR*.⁴ This historical and organizational development underscores the fact that fundraising has always been at the heart of *missio Munich*'s mission. From Pauline Jaricot's grassroots initiative in 1822 to today's campaigns like *World Mission Sunday*, the sustainability and reach of Catholic missionary work have depended on the generosity of the faithful. In the modern context, as church funding models evolve and public support structures shift, innovative and ethically grounded fundraising remains not only a practical necessity but also a continuation of a deeply rooted spiritual and communal tradition. For *missio Munich* and its MARMICK partners, fundraising is therefore not just a financial tool, but a vital expression of solidarity within the global church.

Before delving into the particular fundraising needs and challenges faced by Catholic organizations like *missio Munich*, it is valuable to first reflect on the broader conceptual framework of fundraising within a religious context. The Catholic theologian and spiritual writer Henri Nouwen offers a profound perspective by presenting fundraising as a form of ministry. He emphasizes that fundraising transcends the mere act of collecting money; it is fundamentally about articulating a shared vision and inviting others to participate in the Church's mission.⁵ The perspective is especially significant for faith-based organizations, where financial support is inextricably linked to ecclesial identity and mission.

At *missio Munich*, fundraising is essential not only for operational sustainability but also for realizing the missional mandate. In 2022, approximately 52% of the organization's total income was generated through fundraising activities – a figure that highlights its strategic importance. The annual report for 2022 offers a clear picture of the scope and impact of this support: contributions from 31,721 individual donors enabled the implementation of 759 projects in 53 countries across Africa, Asia, and Oceania.⁶ These efforts reflect both the global outreach of the *Pontifical Mission Societies* and the continuing relevance of *missio Munich*'s work in promoting solidarity, pastoral care, and social development.

⁴ Cf. <https://www.missio.com/ueber-uns/geschichte/die-historie-von-missio-muenchen> [accessed: January 26, 2026].

⁵ Cf. Henri Nouwen, *A Spirituality of Fundraising*, Nashville 2010, 3–6.

⁶ Cf. https://www.missio.com/images/Dateien/Ueber%20uns/missio_transparent/Jahresbericht_2022/Der_Jahresbericht_2022_zum_Download.pdf [accessed: January 26, 2026].

3. Current Challenges in Church Fundraising

The contemporary fundraising environment for Catholic organizations in Germany is shaped by a complex interplay of internal challenges and external pressures, many of which are intensifying amid broader socio-economic and ecclesial shifts. These dynamics have profound implications for the long-term sustainability of institutions such as *missio Munich*.

One of the most pressing concerns is the significant decline in membership within the Catholic Church in Germany. This trend not only reduces the pool of potential donors but also signals a broader erosion of trust and identification with institutional religion. Simultaneously, structural reforms within dioceses – often necessitated by financial constraints – have led to the reallocation or reduction of available resources, undermining the ability of dioceses to consistently support external organizations. Moreover, global church-related issues, such as international solidarity and mission work, frequently receive limited attention at the parish level, thereby weakening grassroots support for organizations with an international focus.

The financial ramifications of these developments are considerable. While the number of active donors for *missio Munich* has remained relatively stable over the past two decades, donation volumes have stagnated, even as operational and project-related expenses continue to rise. This widening gap places increasing pressure on fundraising efforts to bridge shortfalls. Additionally, financial grants from dioceses – traditionally a key component of the funding mix – are no longer assured and are often subject to short-term budgetary constraints.

External socio-economic factors further compound these challenges. Economic uncertainty in Germany, including inflation and evolving consumer behavior, has diminished the capacity for donations, particularly among younger generations. At the same time, the age profile of existing donors presents a significant long-term risk: most committed supporters belong to older generations, and generational shifts – marked by changing attitudes toward institutional giving and religious engagement – raise critical questions about how future fundraising models must adapt to remain effective.

A visual representation of these dynamics emerges in the donor pyramid, which vividly illustrates both the narrowing base of potential supporters and the increasing dependence on an aging donor cohort. This pyramid, metaphorically “standing on unstable ground,” underscores the urgent necessity for broader outreach, heightened public visibility, and innovative strategies to attract and retain new segments of donors.

4. Opportunities and Strategic Responses

4.1 *Missio Munich's Approach to Funding Challenges*

In response to the significant challenges outlined above, *missio Munich* has crafted a diversified fundraising strategy designed not only to stabilize existing revenue streams but also

to cultivate new avenues for long-term financial sustainability. This approach reflects a nuanced understanding of the evolving donor landscape and the necessity to adapt to both demographic and technological shifts. At its core lies a professionally structured fundraising department that seamlessly integrates data-driven planning with mission-centered donor engagement. The department's efforts are concentrated in four key areas: data analysis, online fundraising, major giving (encompassing both individual and institutional donors), and donor cultivation and solicitation – with a particular emphasis on acquiring new supporters, a priority that has grown increasingly urgent in recent years. *Missio Munich* employs a multifaceted fundraising portfolio, including direct mail campaigns, major donor initiatives, and an expanding focus on digital fundraising. This diversity enables the organization to reach distinct donor segments and tailor communications to varying preferences, age groups, and levels of engagement. While traditional methods such as mailings remain effective, especially among older donors, the organization is investing more in digital channels to attract younger generations and maintain relevance in a rapidly changing media environment. Importantly, donor cultivation is regarded not merely as a financial imperative but as a relational and pastoral practice, deeply rooted in the organization's missionary identity. Solicitation efforts are intentionally mission-oriented, transparent, and value-driven, aligning with the spiritual and ethical standards expected of a *Pontifical Mission Society*. Through this integrated and adaptive approach, *missio Munich* seeks not only to address immediate funding needs but also to build a resilient, mission-aligned donor base capable of sustaining its work well into the future. A cornerstone of effective fundraising is a profound understanding of one's donor base. At *missio Munich*, comprehensive donor analysis has yielded valuable insights into the socio-demographic and behavioral characteristics of its supporters, informing strategies for communication, segmentation, and engagement.

These findings are critical for shaping communication strategies, segmentation, and donor engagement methods. The majority of *missio Munich* donors are older adults, with a significant concentration in the 60+ age group, particularly those aged 75 and above. While women represent the larger share of the overall donor base, major donors are predominantly male. Donors to *missio Munich* are typically found in small communities and single-family homes, often situated within well-established residential areas. Many belong to multi-generational households or are couples without children, and a significant proportion are high-income earners who combine a brand-conscious and sustainability-oriented mindset with traditional consumption habits. Motivated by deep personal commitment and Christian convictions, these donors are distinguished by their loyalty and long-term support – not only for *missio Munich*, but also for numerous other charitable organizations. Their generosity is sustained less by a demand for detailed impact reporting and more by a profound trust in the integrity and expertise of the organization. For instance, fewer than one-third of major donors wish to direct the use of their contributions, with the majority preferring to rely on *missio Munich's* discretion in allocating funds. Simple gestures of appreciation, such as thank-you letters and donation receipts, are highly valued, while comprehensive project reports or in-depth evaluations are seldom requested. Among all project

areas, ‘help for children’ consistently emerges as the most emotionally resonant and compelling theme across every donor segment.⁷ These insights enable *missio Munich* to design more targeted fundraising campaigns and to cultivate donor relationships that are both responsive to demographic realities and aligned with the organization’s mission.

4.2 Organizational Readiness and Preconditions

To successfully pioneer innovative models of Catholic fundraising, it is crucial to first cultivate the internal foundations that make such approaches possible.

Moving beyond mere goodwill or temporary initiatives, organizations must achieve a state of organizational readiness – a blend of structural, cultural, and operational capacities that ensures fundraising is both sustainable and effective. This readiness is not simply a background requirement; it is the bedrock upon which lasting and impactful fundraising strategies are built:

- strong governance structures, ensuring transparency, accountability, and alignment with ecclesial values;
- an internal advocate for fundraising at the management level;
- well-established and impactful programs, capable of demonstrating measurable outcomes;
- qualified support and service staff, including fundraising professionals with technical expertise;
- well-trained and mission-aligned volunteers, who can extend the organization’s reach and authenticity;
- a clearly articulated mission statement, underpinned by shared values and a compelling case for support;
- reliable systems for data tracking and analysis, to monitor donor behavior, optimize engagement strategies, and ensure data-driven decision-making;
- and finally, an adequate budget for fundraising activities, recognizing that investment is a prerequisite for long-term returns.

A truly fundraising-ready organization distinguishes itself by crafting a compelling case for support – one that transcends mere institutional descriptions. Such a case must vividly convey the significance of the organization’s mission, demonstrate its responsiveness to urgent needs, and clearly articulate the transformative impact it seeks to achieve.

An effective case for support is marked by several essential elements: it begins with a clear and compelling articulation of the organization’s mission and the specific needs it seeks to address. It then outlines concrete strategies designed to meet those needs, identifies the beneficiaries of the organization’s work, and demonstrates the organization’s competence and credibility. Additionally, it provides a detailed explanation of the resources required to

⁷ Cf. Internal donor survey conducted by *missio Munich*, 2015; *AZ Fundraising*, Spenderstrukturanalyse mission, o. O. 2023.

achieve its goals and offers accessible pathways for making donations, highlighting the benefits of contributing.

In essence, donors are inspired to give not simply because an organization expresses internal financial needs, but because it convincingly demonstrates its capacity to address real human or societal challenges. The central question, therefore, is not whether the organization needs funds, but whether it is equipped to respond effectively to the needs of the world.⁸ In the case of the Catholic Church, the answer remains a resounding yes: the church meets needs – spiritually, socially, and globally.

4.3 Strengths of Catholic Fundraising

Establishing the necessary organizational conditions – such as internal readiness and a clear case for support – is essential for a fundraising strategy. However, as an internally driven activity, Catholic fundraising exhibits several unique strengths that distinguish it from secular and other faith-based fundraising models. These strengths are deeply rooted in the theological, institutional, and communal identity of the church, and they contribute to both the effectiveness and resilience of Catholic fundraising practices:

i. Spiritual and theological foundation

Catholic fundraising finds its deepest roots in the church's faith and doctrine. Here, giving transcends the realm of mere transaction – it becomes an act of worship, a living expression of discipleship, and a journey toward spiritual maturity. Within this theological framework, generosity is not simply a response to need, but a profound participation in God's mission. This understanding imbues every appeal with moral and emotional depth, nurturing enduring loyalty among donors and forging a meaningful bond between the act of giving and the ongoing growth of personal faith.

ii. Mission-driven and communal appeal

At its heart, Catholic fundraising is animated by a profound sense of mission. It seeks to advance the church's calling to evangelize, serve the marginalized, champion justice, and strengthen the Body of Christ. This mission-driven focus inspires donors who are drawn not by material incentives or branding, but by a deep commitment to the church's spiritual and social vocation.

Equally integral is the community-centered character of Catholic fundraising. Rooted in the parish structure, the church fosters a powerful sense of belonging and shared purpose among its members. Fundraising initiatives frequently address both the immediate needs of local parishes and the broader objectives of diocesan or global church endeavors. This dual approach not only broadens participation but also cultivates a vibrant spirit of stewardship within the faith community.

⁸ Cf. *Lilly Family School of Philanthropy*, The Annual Fund. [Unpublished seminar material, 2014]; *Eugene R. Tempel; Timothy L. Seiler; Dwight F. Burlingame* (Eds.), *Achieving Excellence in Fundraising*, 4th ed., San Francisco 2016, 37 f.

iii. Integration with ecclesial structures and the liturgical calendar

The Church's hierarchical and sacramental framework enables fundraising initiatives at every level – parish, diocesan, national, and international – allowing campaigns to be precisely tailored to a wide spectrum of needs. Catholic fundraising is seamlessly woven into the rhythm of liturgical life, with seasonal appeals during Lent, Advent, and major feast days offering spiritually meaningful opportunities to unite charitable giving with reflection, sacrifice, and generosity. Moreover, fundraising is often thoughtfully connected to sacramental milestones – baptisms, weddings, confirmations, and funerals – providing natural and heartfelt occasions for members to express their generosity and support.

iv. Breadth and diversity of causes

A distinctive strength of Catholic fundraising lies in its broad and inclusive support for a diverse array of causes. It sustains the upkeep of ecclesiastical infrastructure – such as churches and seminaries – while advancing Catholic education through schools and universities, nurturing missionary endeavors, and fostering pastoral ministries. Special emphasis is placed on initiatives that embody Catholic social teaching, including health care, humanitarian aid, youth outreach, support for migrants, and programs dedicated to justice and peace. Among these, the cause of 'helping children' stands out as particularly compelling, consistently striking a deep chord with donors and frequently taking center stage in fundraising campaigns.

v. Emphasis on relationship-building and donor engagement

Catholic fundraising can place significant emphasis on building long-term relationships with donors. This includes personalized communication, thank-you letters, regular updates, and transparency regarding the use and impact of funds. Most Catholic donors value trust and credibility over detailed reporting and often prefer to make unrestricted donations, confident in the institution's capacity to allocate resources where they are most needed. The inclusion of the church in wills and estate plans (legacy giving) represents a promising yet still underutilized opportunity to secure lasting support for its mission.

vi. Volunteer engagement and formation

Another hallmark of Catholic fundraising is the active involvement of lay volunteers, particularly at the parish level. Volunteers can organize events, assist with mailings, or lead stewardship initiatives. This participatory model not only reduces operational costs but also fosters a sense of ownership and engagement within the community. Moreover, many fundraising efforts include an educational component that informs parishioners about the theological rationale for giving, the specific needs being addressed, and the impact of their contributions.

In essence, Catholic fundraising stands apart through its seamless integration of faith, vibrant community engagement, alignment with the liturgical calendar, and a steadfast commitment to social justice. These intrinsic strengths not only embody the church's core values and mission but also enhance the credibility, emotional resonance, and overall ef-

fectiveness of its development initiatives. By recognizing and building upon these foundational qualities, the Church can craft future-oriented fundraising strategies that are both theologically grounded and operationally robust.

4.4 Innovative Models and Future Perspectives in Catholic Fundraising

As the Catholic Church in Germany and beyond faces profound societal, demographic, and institutional transformations, fundraising is itself undergoing a necessary evolution. No longer should it be regarded merely as a reaction to financial shortfalls; rather, fundraising must be embraced as a strategic and pastoral opportunity – one that forges relationships, advances the church’s mission, and nurtures a culture of stewardship. The following section highlights the principal areas where Catholic fundraising can seize new opportunities and foster innovation today:

i. Responding to Structural and Financial Change

A primary impetus for the transformation of church fundraising lies in the diminishing church tax revenues. As membership declines – especially in Germany – the previously reliable church tax system can no longer adequately sustain the financial needs of dioceses and parishes. This growing fiscal gap elevates the strategic importance of fundraising as both an alternative and a complementary source of support.

At the same time, the Church faces sweeping societal and ecclesial changes – characterized by increasing secularization, demographic shifts, and ongoing structural reforms – that demand innovative, flexible, and forward-thinking fundraising approaches.

ii. Enhancing Communication and Transparency

Effective fundraising in today’s environment is anchored in open and transparent communication with both donors and parishioners. By providing regular updates on financial needs, project achievements, and the tangible impact of contributions, the church fosters trust and deepens engagement within its community. Transparency serves not only as a moral obligation but also as an essential strategy amid increased public scrutiny of church institutions.

A vivid and compelling narrative – one that clearly articulates the church’s mission and demonstrates its impact – combined with accessible financial reporting, enables donors to see the direct results of their generosity at both local and global levels. This approach not only strengthens the credibility of fundraising appeals but also affirms the church’s unwavering commitment to accountability.

iii. Strengthening Community and Mission Engagement

Contemporary fundraising offers a profound opportunity to revitalize the communal fabric of the church. When fundraising initiatives are anchored in local needs or tangible community projects, they inspire collective ownership and a shared sense of purpose. Whether supporting outreach, pastoral care, or the preservation of sacred spaces and buildings, these endeavors embody active engagement in the church’s mission.

Moreover, nurturing enduring relationships with donors transforms giving from a mere transaction into a meaningful partnership grounded in faith, spiritual conviction, and common purpose. This relational approach deepens the sense of belonging and shared responsibility, inviting donors to participate actively in the church's pastoral and missionary work. In doing so, it strengthens the community's connection to the church and fosters lasting support.

iv. Embracing Digital and Hybrid Innovations

The advent of digital media has ushered in a new era of possibilities for Catholic fundraising. Organizations such as *missio Munich* are increasingly embracing online donation platforms, e-mail and social media campaigns, digital storytelling, and curated donor journeys, as well as hybrid fundraising events that blend in-person and virtual participation.

These innovative tools not only enhance the convenience of giving but also extend the church's reach to younger generations and geographically dispersed supporters. Through platforms like *Instagram*, *Facebook*, and *YouTube*, the church can vividly share stories of hope, need, and impact – cultivating personal connections and evoking genuine emotional resonance among its community.

v. Diversification of Fundraising Strategies

A multifaceted fundraising strategy is essential to address the church's complex and varied financial needs. Innovative approaches may include capital campaigns for major projects such as church renovations or new constructions; major giving programs supported by personalized donor cultivation; legacy and planned giving, encouraging parishioners to remember the church in their wills and estates; and corporate partnerships that open new funding streams and enhance public visibility. Additionally, targeted fundraising for specific initiatives – such as education, youth ministry, social justice, or international missions – alongside educational programs and donor workshops that illuminate the theological and practical value of giving, all contribute to a resilient and future-oriented fundraising portfolio.

By embracing a comprehensive fundraising portfolio, church institutions can build resilience and adaptability across generations and donor types.

vi. Promoting a culture of stewardship and generosity

One of the most transformative opportunities in Catholic fundraising lies in cultivating a culture of stewardship. This means embedding the spiritual foundations of generosity into the very fabric of church life – not as an occasional appeal, but as a fundamental aspect of Christian discipleship.

Parishes and dioceses can nurture this culture through formation programs, homiletic engagement, and community-building activities that celebrate the joy and significance of giving. Ultimately, stewardship is not merely about managing resources; it is a grateful response to God's blessings and a shared commitment to the church's mission.

vii. Engaging the next generation

To ensure long-term sustainability, the Church must actively engage younger Catholics in its (fundraising) vision. This can include:

- creating youth-led initiatives that empower participation;
- promoting volunteer opportunities and peer-to-peer giving models;
- communicating through modern digital channels with relevant and inspiring content;
- emphasizing impact, transparency, and authenticity, values that resonate strongly with Gen Z and Millennials.

In cultivating this next generation of donors, the Church is not merely securing financial stability – it is forming missionary disciples invested in the future of Catholic life and witness.

While financial challenges have made fundraising a necessity, they have also opened the door to pastoral creativity and strategic innovation. Fundraising today is not only a means of financial survival but also a vital expression of mission, communion, and evangelization. If approached thoughtfully and prayerfully, it has the potential to strengthen the church, build new relationships, and inspire a renewed culture of generosity and solidarity.

5. Conclusion: The Church Needs Strategic Fundraising – From Financial Strategy to Spiritual Movement

Fundraising within the Catholic Church transcends mere financial necessity; it stands as a strategic and pastoral response to the complex challenges of our era – ranging from demographic decline and secularization to mounting financial uncertainty. As this article tried to demonstrate, Catholic fundraising is deeply anchored in the Gospel and in the church's mission to embody faith, hope, and love in the world. These Christian virtues – especially generosity, solidarity, and stewardship – form the spiritual bedrock for a renewed culture of giving.

In this context, fundraising should not be viewed simply as a reaction to financial scarcity, but rather as a pastoral and missionary instrument – a ministry in its own right. It empowers the Church to fulfil its mission and invites the faithful to participate through tangible, meaningful support.

When embraced holistically, fundraising has the potential to become a true movement – one that unites individuals around a shared spiritual purpose. Several key factors are essential for such a transformation:

- *A clear and compelling vision:* Successful fundraising communicates a cause that resonates deeply with people's values and beliefs, inspiring widespread support through shared purpose.
- *Broad-based community participation:* When fundraising includes social participation – through events, volunteering, or online networks – it fosters communal ownership and shared responsibility.

- *Authentic storytelling*: Personal stories and real-life impact examples connect donors emotionally to the cause, enhancing both engagement and retention.
- *Leadership and credible ambassadors*: Trusted voices within and beyond the church help to amplify the message, building trust and visibility.
- *Sustained and strategic effort*: Unlike one-time campaigns or appeals, a movement sustains momentum through consistent communication, long-term planning, and evolving engagement methods.
- *Grassroots involvement*: Local and lay participation ensures authenticity, diversity, and resilience.

The Catholic Church, with its long-standing tradition of community, identity, and mission, is uniquely positioned to develop such a movement. When effectively communicated and rooted in ecclesial identity, fundraising becomes not just a strategic tool, but also a spiritual practice – a form of worship and gratitude:

“Giving is a tangible expression of our gratitude and devotion to God. This elevates fundraising from a mere financial necessity to a spiritual practice, inviting donors to participate in a form of worship through their generosity.”⁹

In this way, the future of Catholic fundraising lies not only in financial innovation but in reclaiming its theological depth, communal roots, and spiritual purpose. It is not only about supporting church activities but about inviting people into the mission of the church as co-workers in service, justice, and faith.

Inmitten kirchlicher Umbrüche argumentiert dieser Artikel, dass katholisches Fundraising eine strategische und theologische Aufgabe ist. Er skizziert aktuelle Herausforderungen des kirchlichen Fundraisings, dessen Chancen sowie strategische Reaktionsmöglichkeiten. Anhand von *missio München* als Fallstudie verknüpft er Identität und Sendung (Mission) mit der Fundraising-Praxis und schlägt konkrete Antworten vor: organisatorische Bereitschaft und Voraussetzungen, spezifische Stärken des katholischen Fundraisings sowie innovative Modelle und Zukunftsperspektiven. Abschließend kommt der Artikel zu dem Ergebnis, dass missionsorientiertes Fundraising als glaubwürdiges kirchliches Zeugnis wirken kann.

⁹ <https://thefocusgroup.com/fundraising-with-faith-crafting-a-theology-of-development/> [accessed: January 26, 2026].