

The Xavier 1552 Membership Campaign

The Case to USCMA Organizational Members

Xavier 1552 is our 2017 membership campaign. Our goal is to recruit 1,552 associate members between December 3rd – St. Francis Xavier’s Feast Day – and January 8, 2018 (Baptism of the Lord). It is an ambitious goal but consider this –

- 1) How many parishes are there in the United States of America? If we had one associate member from each parish, we would have 17,576; \$439,400 which is 15% more than our current budget.
- 2) How many former volunteers are there in the United States of America? The Catholic Volunteer Network estimates 20,000 volunteers annually. There are a lot of volunteer “alumni” out there.
- 3) How many Catholics are there in the United States of America? According to the Official Catholic Directory, there are 71 million. Could we recruit 1%; 710,000? Half of a percent; 355,000?

Associate members will receive tangible and intangible benefits. The tangible ones are a monthly e-letter focusing on “bringing mission” home to the parish, discounts on USCMA programs and publications, and access to member only resources. The intangible ones are the most important – building solidarity among missionary disciples, accompanying lay women and men through the missionary process, and formation in missionary discipleship.

Let’s be clear – we need organizational members to recruit associate members. Here is the deal –

- 1) If mission is going to grow, it must be rooted in the laity and in parish life.
- 2) If people are going to consider a vocation in mission, they must experience mission first hand.
- 3) If USCMA is going to serve parishes, volunteer programs, and religious communities, it must broaden its base of support.

Of course, there is a much bigger vision at work here. What role will the US Church play in the third wave of globalization? Will we be pawns of the wealthy and powerful or will we preach the Gospel to both the poor and the powerful – building bridges of purpose and peace?

Let’s pause here for a moment and just recall St. Francis Xavier’s heroic efforts to forge bridges between the Catholic Church and the “far east.”

Finally, let’s tackle the obvious. Will promoting an associate membership in USCMA detract from the donors and associates that organizational members have worked so hard to recruit? We don’t think so. First, this is a membership campaign, not an annual appeal. Second, USCMA will not have to do fund-raising if membership covers our budget. Third, the associate membership opens new ways for organizations to connect with your donors and associates. Finally, if the associate membership grows, it will create new opportunities for our organizational members.



The Board of Directors set three goals for 2018 – increase membership, grow the conference, and recruit grants.

We want to begin with the parish. We want to recruit associate members from parishes across the country. We want to encourage these missionary disciples to consider ways they can root mission in their parish – through mission leaders, a mission council, a parish “mission” or mission project. At the end of the day, we want missionary disciples to be able to name how they are doing mission.

We need each organizational member to be intentional about who they will encourage to become an associate member. Start small – create a list of ten people. Second, craft your email. There are samples on our [website](#). Third, send your email. Fourth, follow-up with them to see if they will join. If no, ask them why and let us know so we can improve the campaign.

By recruiting laity rooted in parish life, we can engage them in bringing mission home to the parish. The 2018 Annual Conference – Boston, MA from October 25-27, 2018 – will have workshops to help the laity begin mission in their parish.

USCMA is not doing an end of the year appeal in favor of this membership campaign. USCMA is asking each current member, for the good of mission, for the good of our Church, and for the good of our organizational members, to intentionally invite 10 missionary disciples to join USCMA.

Feedback, comments, and suggestions are always welcome. Contact Don McCrabb, USCMA Executive Director – dmccrabb@uscatholicmission.org.

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