

Ethics of Fundraising in Catholic Worship

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One of the benchmarks of assessing fruitful and effective liturgical celebration is the sanctification of humankind, achieved through liturgical decorum, reverence and diligence. Nonetheless, with the gale of aberrations that have inundated worship today and the attendant impoverishment and underdevelopment of worshippers, there is concern about how funds and project appeals are solicited, both from local and foreign donors. Indeed, much has been written and said about fundraising, its effects and allurements that has painted some churches and ministers of God either as saints or devils.¹ Relevant literature shows that although scholarship has thrown more light on the issue of fundraising in Christianity in general, it does not adequately address the challenges raised in this article. Fundraising at Catholic worship seems to have harmful effects of uncontrolled injury at her celebrations. What ethical principles will guide the Catholic Church so that she might genuinely raise funds without causing injury to her worship? Most of the findings of the scholars are broad on the subject matter of fundraising in Christianity. This contribution focuses on the ethics of fundraising since Catholic liturgy has its unique structure and norms. Raising funds during the Catholic worship is itself not an aberration especially in this 21st century Catholic Christianity that many foreign aids and sponsorships are dwindling. Admittedly, the Church in Africa and indeed, mission Churches depend largely on these collections for income generations. From inception of Christianity in Africa, the funding for running the Churches was

¹ See for instance: Patrick Paul Udoh, "The Church in Nigeria and Fund-Raising: Checking the Abuses," *Ministerium: Journal of Contextual Theology* 4 (December 2018): 1-12; Emmanuel C. Anagwo, "Fund Raising in Worship: Implications for the Church in Nigeria," *African Christian Studies* 31, no. 3 (September 2015): 61-73; Ebere Uke Ukah & Peter O. Awojobi, "The Theological Implications of Fund Raising in the Mainline Churches in Africa with Reference to Nigeria," in *WAATI Papers* no. 8, vol. II, ed. Francis Appiah-Kubi et al. (Kumasi: University Printing Press, 2014); 146-160; Kerry A. Robinson, "Fundraising as Christian Stewardship" in *A Pastor's Toolbox: Management Skills for Parish Leadership*, ed. Paul A. Holmes (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2014).

generated by the early missionaries from their home countries. Human and financial resources were managed by them. Donor agencies like *Missio Aachan* and *Kirche in Not* complement their efforts and have supported various strategic projects like building of Churches, Cathedrals, seminaries, religious houses, retreat centres, secretariat, maintenance of clerics, religious men and women, catechists and even lay faithful. Unfortunately, many of these missionaries have left African countries and the donor agencies are saying that available funds are limited and it is not possible to assist all those who ask for grants.

Evidently, fund is something everyone needs. Government needs funds to run and maintain her personnel, parastatals and projects. Groups need fund. Individuals need fund. The Church needs fund. Yet, this must be approached with serious caution and prudence. Catholic worship, however, are generally well known for their instructions, guidelines, decorum, rites and rituals as far as the raising funds and its related issues are concerned. The worship has well organised institutions that ensure uniformity in these collections at worship. In the past, many Pentecostal churches were jealous of this tradition that has sustained the Catholic Church for over two thousand years. In recent times, the Catholic liturgy has metamorphosed where we turn now to imitate Pentecostal liturgies that were accused of being exploitative and executing money driven ministries. The Catholic Bishops' Conference of Nigeria (CBCN) expressed concern for the excessive monetary collections that have found their way into the Catholic liturgy.² This non-liturgical practice, like other aberrations, obscures the very essence of the liturgy. The salient question today is: "Can the Catholic worship sincerely maintain that fund has not come to the centre of their worship?" Today, celebration of the Eucharistic liturgy has been turned into a fanfare by many priests in the name of fundraising for the work of God.

This article serves to educate, enlighten and re-orient Catholics on the ethical guidelines of fundraising for the Church's missionary enterprise. This helps to form the mentality of Catholics to be self-

² Catholic Bishops' Conference of Nigeria (CBCN), "Religion as Instrument for Peace and Integral Human Development," no.4, <http://stpetersunn.org/catholic-bishops-conference-of-nigeria-communique-religion-as-instrument-for-peace-and-integral-development/> (accessed January 25, 2018).

reliant, pastorally and liturgically decorous. In this article, efforts would be expended in order to bring to limelight, in simple and concise terms and illustrations, what fundraising truly mean. We will attempt to expose the meaning and rationale involved in the fundraising. We shall equally discuss the biblical and theological foundations of fundraising. In the end, it is hoped that this contribution shall re-direct many erring laity, religious and priests back to the right track on the ethics of what fundraising truly mean in the Catholic liturgy.

Fundraising: A General Consideration and Key Indicators

Fundraising is generally considered to be a worthwhile venture for Christians for the work of God. It entails the act of collecting or producing money or project appeals needed for a particular purpose or function especially towards a charitable project. In the same trend of thought, the contemporary use of the concept, among Catholic Christians in Africa, fundraising embraces those other collections at the Eucharistic celebration which are taken apart from the standard offering. Usually, these collections are designated for particular purposes with such designations as Harvest and Bazaar, Tithes, Sowing of Seeds, Church building collection, Project Sunday collection, etc.

John Obilor avers that another slightly different trend is fundraising viewed as a kind of commerce that takes place in religion. He maintains that such buying and selling in the religious context is not an unusual thing. Assuredly, such buying and selling in the name of God remains an essential part of religion, which needs to be integrated.³ Consequently, he affirms that fundraising is not just a one directional activity that is limited to asking for and receiving funds. Sometimes, fundraising can be two directional, namely: the funds may be raised through commercial activities that involve buying and selling.

Be that as it may, the Catholic worship would be losing its identity when unnecessary collection of funds are done in the Church.

³ John I. Obilor, "Marketing' God in Nigeria: The Case of Christianity in Igboland," *Ephrem's Theological Journal* 13, no. 1 (March 2009): 72-80 at 72.

Pastors and the lay faithful ought to rediscover the ethics of fundraising at worship in the light of the sometimes strong urge to wrong and illegal Church collections, levies and fundraising. Collection of money or project appeals as far as "the end justifies the means" (e.g. to use them for parish or diocesan projects) is the order of the day. This lack of order in our mode of worship is gradually making the faithful to derail from the purpose of worship. Liturgical celebrations are meant to lead to the glorification of God and the sanctification of people (*glorificationis Dei et sanctificationis populi*). Hence, they ought to be treated with all the dignity and solemnity that they deserve. In this article, fundraising refers to all the activities through which material wealth could be acquired for the Church. Additionally, this liturgical act includes the usual offerings collected at the Eucharistic liturgy which may be in the form of money or other materials.

Rationale for Ethics of Fundraising: The Case of the Catholic Worship

By ethics we mean a code of human conduct which regulates and guides the behaviour of any organisation, group and profession among themselves and the society. Ethics attempts to answer the question of social norms and values that are the standard for determining the best behaviour in the community. Every organised ceremony that requires proper decorum establishes norms to regulate the conduct of the events. The purpose of ethical principles is not to punish but to regulate, guide, and protect those who are subject to their prescriptions. Ethical principles govern the actions of those who are subject to their promulgation. There is hardly any aspect of life that is not controlled by some set of principles. Humans, animals, and plants exist by responding to both natural and conventional principles of life.

When human affair is organised in a way that it does not recognise God or respect for His instructions and norms, then the result is that humanity is made less human. One can, along with Joseph Ratzinger, draw a very strong conclusion that: "in the final analysis, worship and law cannot be completely separated from each other. God has a right to a response from man and where that right of God totally disappears, the order of law among men is dissolved, because

there is no cornerstone to keep the whole structure together."¹ This is why there are liturgical norms guiding the celebration of the liturgy and these norms or rules cannot be separated from it and they must be obeyed.

Catholic worship by its nature as public worship belong to the entire people of God, with each performing the different role or roles that are assigned to him/her by virtue of the nature of the liturgy. Hence, this worship has guiding principles and foundational laws that guide its celebration. These principles and foundational laws that come out of the living tradition of the Church have been fashioned out of the experience of the Church that has, through the generations, used the liturgy as the means of encounter per excellence with God in His mystery. There are also other liturgical principles that are encrypted within the rubrics of the celebrations of every liturgical action. These laws are not some pieces of advice that can be routinely obeyed and disobeyed at will. They are important for the valid celebration of the liturgy so that it could be seen as the true sign of unity that it is for the entire people of God.

In this regard, beyond theory and praxis of the Eucharistic liturgy as a place of encounter with the Divine, it is well known for its instructions and guidelines. Majorly, it is divided into two parts, namely: the liturgy of the Word and the liturgy of the Eucharist. These two main parts constitute one single progressive celebration, like one Act in two scenes. The congregation is first prepared by the Word of God and this leads them to the altar of sacrifice where they are fed with the sacramental Body and Blood of Christ. Sadly enough, this enriching simple Eucharistic liturgy has come under threat in many Christian communities as a result of the habitual inclusion of multiple fundraising activities such as mini-launching, project appeals, development collections, sales of books, magazines and calendars. The high point of these activities is reached during the annual harvest celebration. Here the house of prayer is wrongly turned into a market place for the sales of bazaar items. In some instances, the main parts of the celebration receive less attention so as to create more time for the fundraising. To complicate the

¹ Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger, *The Spirit of the Liturgy*, trans. John Saward (San Francisco: Ignatius, 2000), 19.

unsavoury development, at times, some very adventurous clerics and laity alike employ techniques inimical to liturgical decorum and sanctity, all in the bid to motivate the people to make monetary donations. Of course, the Church in Africa today still needs money, like in other climes, to meet the challenges of evangelisation, infrastructure, training of personnel, etc. Though the Church needs money, it does not diminish her mission as Church since money as such is not evil. On the contrary, money may be a blessing from God (1 Chron 29:12). Accordingly, biblical and theological bases abound to illuminate on fundraising.

Biblical and Theological Insights on Fundraising

Biblical bases, references, antecedents and exemplars for fundraising by the people of God for the work of God abound. The Old Testament provides a good foundation for the Christian tradition of fundraising and special project appeals. For instance, Cain and Abel brought their gifts and offered to God from the proceeds of their work (Gen 4:3-7). After the flood, Noah offered burnt offering to the Lord in thanksgiving (Gen 8:20). We are familiar with the offering made by Abraham to Melchizedek (Gen 14:17-20). At God's command, Moses raised funds for building the temple. He called on the Israelites to make contributions for the work of the tent of meeting, for all its service, and for the holy garments (Exod 35:4-119). Positively, the people responded and exceeded the needs of the Levites, to the extent that they were restrained from bringing any more (Chron 31:8-12).

In the New Testament, there is no evidence that Christ opposed or condemned fundraising for the temple. He was positive about giving (Matt 5:42; 25:31-40; 6:1-4; Luke 11:41; Acts 20:35). As He watched people putting money into the treasury, Christ did not condemn the act. Instead, He praised the poor widow for giving all she had to live on (Mark 12:41-44; Luke 21:1-4). He only condemned unjust collections (Matt 21:13-14) and placing unnecessary burdens upon the shoulders of the poor (Matt 23:4). Granted that Christ did not specifically appeal for funds, He received them for Himself and the apostles. We read in Luke 8:1-3 about "certain women who had been cured of evil spirits and ailments: Mary surnamed the Magdalene, from whom seven demons had gone, Joanna the wife of

Herod's steward Chuza, Susanna, and many others who provided for them." He told the Twelve to give without charge since they received without charge (Matt 10:8). While ensuring that the Gospel message was carried to the ends of the earth, they did not charge people. Yet, all manner of support came from everyone (Acts 2:44-46).

In the Acts of the Apostles, the early Christian communities had the practice of supporting the Church, their ministers, and the poor. The community of believers was noted to be of one heart and mind, and no one claimed that any possession was his own, but they had everything in common. There was no needy person among them, for those who owned property or houses would sell them, bring the proceeds of the sale, and put them at the feet of the apostles, and they were distributed to each according to need (Acts 2:44-45; 4:32-37). The famous story of Ananias and Sapphira (Acts 5:1-11), who sold a possession and did not give the whole of the proceeds to the community, shows that sharing of goods was an obligation to the members of the early Christian community.⁵ The bone of contention was not that they did not bring the proceeds of the sale, but the attempt to defraud the other members of the community by lying to them about the proceeds. In fact, the earliest Christian communities showed great concern for their sister churches and took up collections for believers in need living in other communities (Acts 11:27-30; Rom 15:26-27). There is reason to believe that such fundraising assisted the needs of the beneficiary local churches and is a form of evangelisation.

Theologically, fundraising in worship is predicated on the understanding that it is part of the offering at worship. When presented by the congregation, it is a token to thank God for what He has been to them. As the faithful come to the altar to receive blessings from God, the Church offering is the token of gratitude for what God has done in the past. As the Igbo (of Nigeria) would say: "*Eto dike na nke omere, omee kwa ozo*" ("If you thank a warrior on what he/she has done, more will be done.") Another proverb says:

⁵ J. De Santa Ana, *Good News to the Poor: The Challenge of the Poor in the History of the Church* (New York: Maryknoll: Orbis Books 1979), 41.

"*Eto nwanyi onye akidi, ogwota ozo*" ("If you praise the woman who prepares an oil bean, she will prepare another one.") In other words, one good turn deserves another. One cannot expect to receive more blessings from God without the gesture of thanks for the past blessings.⁶ When funds are provided as gift-offering, they show their conviction about God in their lives. Jovian P. Lang corroborates this understanding: "The people's offering of monetary gifts is a symbol of their inner readiness to give God all of themselves with their hopes and disappointments, their work and leisure and their whole everyday lives."

From the foregoing, it is evident that the theological frameworks of fundraising in Catholic worship have biblical connotations and significance. All these biblical insights showed that the practice of fundraising has been a practice in the Church from her earliest times. They emphasise the role of Christian giving and collection of money in worship, as explicated by *The General Instruction of the Roman Missal* that: "It is well also that money or other gifts for the poor or for the Church, brought by the faithful or collected in the Church, should be received. These are to be put in a suitable place but away from the Eucharistic table."⁸ However, today, there are series of appeals and fundraising for one project or another, creating room for abuses to be addressed as a matter of great urgency, by way of reinstating the ethics of fundraising. If not, there will be a continuous disregard for God and the Church in the Eucharistic liturgy. There will be a total loss of meaning of the liturgical worship and loss of sense of prayer and proper attitude to liturgical prayer.

Some Ethical Guidelines for Fundraising at Catholic Worship

Catholic worship is one of the ideal places for instruction in the faith. The entire liturgical ceremony is filled with instructions for

⁶ See Emmanuel C. Anagwo, *Hundred Questions and Answers on the Mass Vol. I* (Onitsha: Laurans Publishers, 2013), 14-15.

⁷ Jovian P. Lang, *Dictionary of the Liturgy* (New York: Catholic Book Publishing Co., 1989), 116.

⁸ *The General Instruction of the Roman Missal* (GIRM) (Nairobi: Paulines Publications Africa, 2003), 73.

the assembly: the gestures, prayers, songs, symbols, readings and rites within the rites are all vehicles of instruction. The liturgy is a veritable school of faith.⁹ To draw out adequately these abundant instructions with any celebration, the need to follow the ethics of fundraising according to the reformed liturgy is pivotal. Admittedly, liturgy is not a private ceremony but the public celebration of the entire Church. The liturgical guidelines also demonstrate the universality of the liturgy. They are also there to guide worshippers in the proper celebration of the liturgy. They stress the indispensability of the norms guiding the liturgy for a dignified, worthy, correct, valid and licit celebration of the liturgy of the Church. Hence, for fundraising to be wholesome, certain ethical guidelines are well thought-out in order to manage fundraising activities in Christian worship. The writer shares some sentiments with Samuel W. Kunhiyop who offers six ethical issues in fundraising as: asking non-Christians to donate, announcing the amounts given, assuming the end justifies the means, promising material rewards, demanding a gift and accepting donations from foreigners.¹⁰ Appreciating these insightful contributions, this contribution, however, is proposing five ethical guidelines for fundraising at worship.

a) Biblically-Based with Gospel Values

Fundraising's motif should be based on the Sacred Scripture. This means that in order to raise funds for their genuine needs, Churches should strictly adhere to biblical principles and avoid such practices that are capable of smearing the name of Christ. Situations that encourage show off and applause should be avoided. The unethical practice and maxims of "take all the devil's money and put it into godly/church uses;" "Do something crazy for the Lord;" "If you are suffering check your offering;" "If things are tight for you check your tithe" as well as using secular/mundane slogans in place of scriptural citations to arouse wrong motivation of reward for donations constitute an ethical issue. It follows that the fundraiser (Church or individual) uses the Biblical passages to motivate people to support a cause. The scriptural passages could be an exhortation

⁹ Emmanuel C. Anagwo, "Celebrating Divine Worship with Faith," *Vidyajyoti Journal of Theological Reflection* 82, no. 8 (August 2018): 586-605.

¹⁰ Samuel W. Kunhiyop, *African Christian Ethics* (Nairobi: Hippo Books, 2008), 177-183.

from God's word. Some Churches use this system to spur people who may have no plan to give in support of an impending cause either with cash, cheque, or promissory notes. It is a very important strategy and highly motivational. However, the best of the systems is to teach God's people how to give based on what the Word of God has provided. The liturgical environment must be praise-worthy and honourable (Phil 4:8). Additionally, it must correspond with the New Testament motivation for giving, namely; a response to the grace of Christ's example in human need (2 Cor 9:8; 8:9,14), an expression of thanks to God. Giving is a concrete proof and a form of sacrifice to God. Hence, careful attention should be given to the wording and method of solicitation.

b) *Fundraising as a Sacred Rite*

In the bid to improve fundraising, some churches embarrass the worshippers by asking them raise up their money while on procession for God and the people to see them. In this way, more funds are netted as almost everybody will like to give high denominations. For them, what matters is that "the end justifies the means." This is a serious ethical issue. Ideally, fundraising must be guided and conducted as a sacred rite. It is something connected with and dedicated to God. It has always been the cherished tradition of the Church that liturgical celebration consists of the material and spiritual, perceptible and imperceptible, internal and external. Nonetheless, the means for the external must give meaning to the spiritual dimension which makes for the sacred dimension of the liturgy. It is within this *corpus* that we can locate fundraising as a sacred action that considers both the end and the means. The demand is the art of working out one's salvation by developing the biblical lifestyle that brings out the maximum use of one's treasure, gifts and talents. When one is in the Church for fundraising, all forms of distracting thoughts, actions and behaviours unbecoming of a worshipper should be cast aside. Where such functions begin with the Mass, they should be celebrated after the post-communion prayer or as the *Acta* for the First Synod of Ikot-Ekpene Diocese recommends, after the final blessing so that the character of the liturgy is not distorted.

¹¹ *ACTA: For the First Synod, Ikot-Ekpene Diocese* (Ikot-Ekpene: Iwoh & Sons Press), 22.

Alternatively, dinner party can be organised in the parish hall or any other convenient gathering environment after the Eucharistic celebration.¹²

c) *Fundraising to be Eucharistic-oriented*

Another sticky ethical issue is whether fundraising is really Eucharistic-oriented or not. This is because the order of the day is that some prosperity gospel pastors and churches demand money and gifts from worshippers, instead of allowing the spirit of Christian giving and investing for eternity to motivate them. 'Eucharistic' is from the root word, Εὐχαριστία (*eucharistia*) which derived from the Greek word, εὐχαριστία (*eucharistia*) which means thanksgiving. Fundraising being Eucharistic means that when we give during the Eucharistic ceremonies, we are participating in a thanksgiving celebration. We give thanks for all that had been given to us by God, especially as seen in the gift of Jesus Christ. We observed that essentially the nature of the Eucharistic celebration is a prayer, a worship whereby the faithful in union with Christ as their head give thanks and praise to God. Thus, as the Eucharist in the first instance is a thanksgiving, our fundraising is part of this thanksgiving. Consequently, we must gather workable ideals and select the best from the pool of the means to achieve our targets. Since the guiding principle of the Eucharistic celebration is "from Mass to Mission,"¹³ Christians should develop the culture of thanksgiving in all facets of their lifestyle. One thing is to give something. Another thing is to give or contribute during fundraising in the right spirit to reap divine approbation, that is, as 'thankgivers' and not as 'grudge or duty givers.' Accordingly, fundraising must be cheerfully done with a clean heart. No malice, bickering, rancour or animosity should characterise Christian giving (see Matt 5:23-24). Thus, the ultimate manifestation of the fruits of the Eucharistic celebration is seen in

¹² The writer is aware that fundraising after the final blessing suggests that it is no longer during liturgical worship and goes beyond the purview of this article; hence, not much is recommended on the modality to go about this issue.

¹³ Emmanuel C. Anagwo, "From Mass to Mission: The Task to Create a Just African Society," in *The Church in Africa Witness to Justice, Peace and Reconciliation A Post-Synodal Reflection and Reception Proceedings of the 27th Annual Conference of the Catholic Theological Association of Nigeria (CATHAN)*, ed. Luke E. Ijezie, Stephen Audu & Agnes I. Acha (Lagos: Clear Impact Services, 2013), 254-274.

the challenge to the faithful to go out and live a thanksgiving life after the example of our Lord, Master and Model. In the words of Valerian Okeke, "We have to move from mere prayer of thanks to a life of thanksgiving. It should be an attitude, a way of life."¹⁴

d) *Accepting Donations from Foreigners*

There is also the ethical issue whether it is justifiable to accept funds outside the Church in Africa or not. We must categorically state that there is nothing wrong to accept funds raised by our brothers and sisters in other Christian churches. As already stated, examples abound on how the earliest Christian churches supported their sister churches and took up collections for believers in need living in other communities (Acts 11:27; Rom 15: 26-27; 2 Cor 8). There is no reason to believe that such collections would not have assisted the needs of the beneficiary suffragan churches. We must note that the Macedonian churches alluded to in the Second Epistle to the Corinthians were not wealthy as some may interpret them to be. According to Paul, they were going through difficulties of "severe trial" and "extreme poverty" (2 Cor 8:2). Despite their condition, they pleaded with Paul to allow them to help the Church in Jerusalem (2 Cor 8:4). A local church can assist another local church to execute their projects. It is not always the rich who gives. Anybody can give. Admittedly, many funds realised through foreign aid and during Christian worship have sustained many laudable projects to keep floating evangelisation, infrastructure, training of personnel, etc. However, accountability of every collection is the watchword. Donors' confidence must be upheld to clear any doubts that their donations may not be properly accounted for.¹⁵ Both the Church asking for funds and the donors must have honest

¹⁴Valerian M. Okeke, *Gratitude Pastoral Letter 2011* (Enugu: SNAAP Press, 2011), 65.

¹⁵To go beyond this dependency syndrome on the foreign donors and indigenous congregants, there is need for the stations, parishes and dioceses to set aside some funds for investment on small-scale businesses such as buying tricycles for needy Church members through revolving loans; building of lock-up stores; clinics; renting canopies and chairs; grinding mills can also be purchased and distributed to women especially; small cooperative groups can be set up at the Basic Christian Communities (BCC) level; block industries can also be set up; young men can be trained as masons and they can earn a living through such organisation; stations, parishes and dioceses will acquire plots of land and develop them for agricultural purposes such as starting fishery, piggery, poultry, bee and snail farming. Meanwhile, one of the ways to actualise self-reliance is to learn how to manage scarce resources. If pastors of souls and their pastoral team continue to mismanage their scarce resources by not avoiding unnecessary expenditure or waste, applying self-control and prioritising, they will continue to have dependency syndrome for foreign aids and beggarly mentality.

¹⁶Kunhiyop, *African Christian Ethics*, 186.

intentions. On the part of the fundraiser, he/she must ask: Why am I seeking for the funds? On the side of the donor, he/she will likewise ask: Why am I making this donation? They must both purify their intentions towards the fundraising activity. Kunhiyop recommends that whenever possible, the donors should be involved in whatever is being done. This will help them to feel more like a part of what is happening. Equally, he recommends that all donations should be acknowledged.

e) Pastoral Plans to be headed by People of Integrity

Another outstanding guideline is to ensure that the objective for the fundraising is part of the pastoral plans of the Church/parish and anchored by people of credible character and integrity. They must follow biblical ethics and as Kunhiyop avers to allow every Christian to hear the voice of God on the matter of giving.¹⁷ False impression must not be allowed to creep into project appeals. Accordingly, Christian fundraisers must always keep in mind that "money follows the mission."¹⁸ Manipulative action should not cover up for the legitimate and rational reasons. Walvoord in Ukah and Awojobi observe what stewardship in fundraising demands: "We must be men and women of integrity in the way we raise money. There can be no ideals. We may coerce people and we certainly cannot coerce God."¹⁹ Worshippers should be properly instructed on the act of Christian giving. They need to know that giving is an aspect of the faith that is as important as witnessing, studying the Bible and praying.²⁰ In all the situations and circumstances, the glory of God must be the highest priority towards preserving the integrity of both the clergy and the lay faithful. It is not just that funds are raised, but also right intention must be induced from the potential givers to consider what they do as part of Christian charity. Very significantly, we warn that while the temptation to compromise for the sake of success may be enticing, if people perceive the Church to be deceptive and manipulative or self-giving (in fundraising), they will perceive the message in the same light. Thus, the Church must avoid the practice of taking money regardless of the source and that of intimidating people into making donations.

¹⁷ Kunhiyop, *African Christian Ethics*, 182.

¹⁸ Robinson, "Fundraising as Christian Stewardship," 88.

¹⁹ Cited in Ukah & Awojobi, "The Theological Implications of Fund Raising," 153.

²⁰ Ibid., 156.

Conclusion

This article has tried to discover that fundraising has raised a lot of questions for both the celebrants and participants which bothered on ethical decorum. This is because uncensored practices or better still, abuses can provoke indecorous attitudes towards the liturgical heritage and patrimony. Today, we witness all sorts of aberrations and even abuses within liturgical celebrations even by some presiding ministers who, unfortunately, ought to know more. We have advocated that fundraising stands out to determine what a people believe and practice when it comes to offering and giving. It is not out of place to say that a people's theology of offering can be best understood through the way funds are being raised especially during liturgical celebrations. In the memorial offering at Mass, the Church here and now assembled in worship offers to God the Father through Christ, and in the Holy Spirit the spotless Victim who is Christ Himself. In so doing, the Church also learns to offer herself, and the individual worshippers as victims of sacrifice in invitation of the Lord, and day by day surrender themselves through Christ the mediator to an ever more complete union with God, and with one another so that at last God may be all in all. In this regard, Kunhiyop affirms that: "The techniques and means employed should not conflict with clear biblical guidelines such as voluntary giving to honour God and investing for eternity."²¹

In conclusion, to achieve this noble aim of worshipping according to the mind of the Church and God without the interference of the abuse of the process of fundraising, there is need for both the clergy and lay faithful to uphold the ethically sound and tested liturgical guidelines. The Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy is clear on this matter: "Pastors of souls must, therefore, realise that, when the liturgy is celebrated, something more is required than the laws governing valid and lawful celebration. It is their duty also to ensure that the faithful take part fully aware of what they are doing, actively engaged in the rite and enriched by it."²² Both the clergy and lay faithful should be instructed on the ethical principles guiding

²¹ Kunhiyop, *African Christian Ethics*, 187.

²² Second Vatican Council, *Sacrosanctum Concilium (The Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy)* in *Vatican Council II*, ed. Austin Flannery (Dublin: Dominican Publications, 1987), no. 11.

fundraising at worship in order to use it to bear fruits of active participation. This is one of the best ways to ensure that the sanity of Catholic worship is not derailed or hijacked and deformed by self-serving groups and individuals who are now distorting Catholic tradition. We insist, therefore, that beyond the faithful reporting all those who engage in the wanton abuse of fundraising at worship, the liturgical commission of every diocese should be charged with the responsibility of correcting and reporting erring priests to the local ordinary, if there is no change of attitude. The crux of this article is that fundraising methods and principles should reflect the biblical ethics concomitant with Gospel values. In this way, these ethical guidelines shall facilitate fundraising in order to give liturgical celebrations the dignity and solemnity that is due. Anything to the contrary will derail fruitful and integral liturgical participation.