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ch-sponsored gambling, games of chance



Jeff Goulding

ded-funds, but also offers opportunities for socialization, especially among the elderly.

A spirit of camaraderie often develops among bingo volunteers despite the hard work involved.



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Despite the moral implications raised by church-sponsored games of chance, the 1986 Notre Dame Study of Catholic Parish Life reports that bingo still ranks second only to Mass among the best-attended parish functions.

Michigan man convinces Catholics to 'give as the Lord gives to them'

Many Catholics consider bingo, raffles and second collections as unofficial articles of faith. But to G.L. "Jiggs" Lenzi, such activities have long seemed unlikely means by which to support the Kingdom of God on earth.

The Michigan resident has spent almost half his life trying to convince fellow Catholics throughout the country that there is an alternative, which he calls sacrificial giving.

Lenzi's crusade began in 1953 when his pastor proposed spending \$15,000 to hire a financial consultant to run a \$200,000 fund-raising campaign. Shocked by the consultant's fee, Lenzi offered to organize the campaign himself and raised \$200,000, spending the rest on himself.

Word of his success spread, and he was invited to speak at various church events. He began to speak at a series of three parish meetings. Selected parishioners are invited to the meetings by the pastor, who tells them only that the parish is facing a problem requiring their assistance.

At each meeting, Lenzi presents the parish's financial situation and asks the parishioners to contribute. He says, "I don't want to ask you for money. I want to ask you for love. Love is the only thing that can change the world."

Although the concept is commonly understood in many Catholic circles, Catholics have long regarded it as a foreign idea. "I don't know what you're talking about," says a priest in a recent interview.

Since he repackaged the concept as "sacrificial giving," Lenzi has not done another fund drive. Nor has his new approach failed to increase revenues in the 688 parishes where he has presented it to date.

He typically begins by assessing a parish's giving record to determine the average weekly donation per family. In the 1960s, that figure was commonly less than \$1, and it remains well under \$5 on average today.

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