



TENDING THE VINEYARD

Stewardship of Religious Property

Top 10 Property-Planning Tips

1. Understand the role the property plays in supporting members, mission, and ministry.
2. Move beyond emotional attachment. Buildings are bricks and mortar; religious communities are people.
3. Do the math. Know total project costs, ongoing maintenance expenses, and the payback period.
4. Count heads. Compile current census numbers and obtain reliable demographic projections for the future.
5. Size it right. Know how much space will be needed in five years, ten years, fifteen years. If possible, structure adaptive re-use into the project plans.
6. Get help. Determine the specific types of expertise needed and look for professionals who have experience assisting religious communities.
7. Stay true to mission. Do not initiate a ministry for which your religious community does not have the skills or expertise simply to fill or save a building.
8. Expect dissent. Maintain open lines of communication, but do not let consensus building bring progress to a halt.
9. Remember, “green” is good, but it can put your finances in the red! Some buildings cannot be renovated, and the wrecking ball may be the best answer.
10. Develop a transition plan. Provide elder members with emotional support and practical help for moving day and the weeks and months to follow.

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The full issue of this newsletter may be viewed at <http://www.usccb.org/about/national-religious-retirement-office/upload/NRRO-Newsletter-Fall-2012.pdf>

Other Resource Websites to visit:
www.usccb.org/nrro
www.retiredreligious.org