

EDITOR'S NOTE

According to eBay, my Holy Childhood Association medal from the early 1960s is worth at least \$4.99. That's pretty good return on investment, since I think Sr. Elizabeth Ann charged each of us a nickel for our medals, which no self-respecting young Catholic of those years would be without. As members of the Holy Childhood Association, we believed we were on a children's crusade. We were sponsoring missionary efforts in lands across the globe and "saving" one disadvantaged baby at a time. After Vatican II, the Holy Childhood Association seemed to fall out of favor, and I'm embarrassed to admit that until recently, my understanding of sponsorship in the Catholic Church hadn't matured beyond that hazy but benign notion that as a medal-wearing member of the Holy Childhood Association, I knew something about being a sponsor.



MARY ANN
STEINER

Looking back, I realize no one ever corrected my definition. We may wonder why the church spent minimal effort to explain the workings of its sponsored ministries and how they come by the authority to carry out their mission. Or why we, the people of God, encouraged since the mid-1960s to enter more fully into community and leadership, haven't been more curious and persistent to learn the workings of our church and its ministries. Fair questions to ask, I think.

But looking forward – which is the point of this issue on sponsorship — gives rise to questions of an entirely different spirit. How can the ministry of sponsorship be enriched with new sponsor models and new sponsor members? How can the legacy of sponsorship shine its light on ways to a vibrant future? How can we laypeople go beyond finding new places on sponsor boards (there are only so many openings) to help call forth and support the prophetic potential of the evolving roles of sponsorship?

How questions are so much more hopeful than *why* questions.

As the authors of the articles in our May-June magazine admit, the *how* questions about changing models of sponsorship and best practices for sponsor boards don't have conclusive answers yet, but they do open compelling possibilities for revitalizing the Catholic health care ministry and perhaps the wider church. Even the language of sponsor conversation allows for variation, so we

have gone with the preference of each author and ministry in describing their entity of sponsorship: PJP (public juridic person), MJP (ministerial juridic person) and MPJP (ministerial public juridic person).

Many thanks to each of our writers for engaging many aspects of sponsorship in transition with candor and insight. We are particularly grateful to Sr. Mary Haddad, RSM, vice president for mission at the Catholic Health Association, and Sr. Peggy Martin, OP, senior vice president of sponsorship/governance at Catholic Health Initiatives, for their help in shaping this issue and identifying authors and topics.

As has become our practice, we highlighted two author's articles with accompanying reflection and discussion questions. Chris Lowney uses his role as a layman on a sponsor board to consider how to revitalize the Catholic Church and its dedicated ministries in the immediate future. Sr. Doris Gottmoeller, RSM, a longtime sponsor and prophetic voice in Catholic health care, moves aside what she calls traditional "churchspeak" to describe the real and sacred identities of sponsorship.

If your magazine looks especially lush with illustrations, it is because the good people at Saint John's Abbey and University in Collegeville, Minnesota, generously allowed us to reproduce some of their beautiful illustrations from the illuminated Saint John's Bible, which was completed in 2011. We are honored to include some of that artwork in these pages and happy to announce that the Saint John's Bible will be on view at the 2017 Catholic Health Assembly in New Orleans.

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