

Planned Giving Tip

December 2005

Bequests - #3 of 3

This is the 3rd of a 3-part series of tips focusing on bequests. These ideas are adapted from an article in Planned Giving Today:

TARGET SPECIAL MAILINGS: Focus on special segments of people for specific attention. For example, parishioners with young children might receive a letter urging them to consider estate planning for the sake of their children, including provisions for guardians and trusts. A bequest might be promoted in terms of a contingency provision, thereby providing maximum support for the children during the dependent years. Another target audience might be widows who may appreciate the simplicity of a bequest program in making future estate gifts (PDS software can help facilitate these segmented letters).

START A HERITAGE SOCIETY: If you do not have a recognition society for your planned giving donors, you are missing one of the best vehicles for promoting planned gifts. Get one started soon and select a name that fits your parish or school. Use this organization to draw together those who have made estate-planning provisions for your organization, including bequest designations. Periodically arrange for special programs and sponsor an annual dinner or brunch to induct new members. Announce the happenings of this society in the bulletin and make it special to belong.

INVOLVE PROFESSIONAL ADVISORS: Lawyers, CPAs, insurance professionals and financial planners are in the business of talking to people about their estate plans. Get to know these advisors in your parish and make sure they know that the parish has a planned giving program. Provide them with a file folder -- updated annually -- with a few annual reports, sample bequest language, and information about your heritage society. These professionals can be a great source of support as many of their clients heed their advice when it comes to charitable giving.

REPEAT, REPEAT, REPEAT: The key to a successful bequest program is repetition. Again and again, your parishioners need to be reminded that remembering the Church in their estate plan is possible and important. Just because you send out a few mailings and maybe include a "remember us" note on a gift receipt is not enough. Never tire of inviting people who believe in the mission of the Church to remember it in their estate plan; universities, hospitals, museums and other charitable organizations sure don't tire of asking their donors to do the same.

Don't Forget...80% of all planned gifts go to universities! From the December 8 issue of the Chronicle of Philanthropy:

- \$100 million pledge to Harvard University by Eli and Edythe Broad for a biomedical research center
- \$40.6 million bequest to Indiana University from Barbara Jacobs for its music school
- \$12 million from Thomas Petters to Rollins College in Winter Park, FL to endow two professorships
- \$5.1 million bequest from Alicia McEvoy to Dominican University of San Rafael, CA for their endowment program. (I wonder how much these donors gave to their church????!!)

Keep planting seeds.

May you enjoy the peace and joy of this Holy Season and may 2006 be a year full of trust and confidence in God's providence.

John