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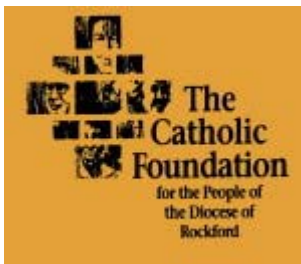
Planned Giving News

Catholic Diocese of Rockford

November 2008



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**From Greg Urban,
Diocesan Director of
Planned Giving**



Dear Greg :

Even though the stock market roller coaster continues and the indexes continue to trend down, we still have much to be thankful for. I encourage you to take some time to reflect on the many good things God has blessed you with this year. I wish each of you a blessed

Gratitude for Heavenly Intervention

The first national Thanksgiving proclamation was issued by the nation's first president, George Washington, more than two centuries ago, and yet disagreement concerning the relative appropriateness of such a holiday delayed its widespread observance. In the decades prior to the American Civil War, one woman chose to intervene, reintroducing the notion in a series of annual editorials. The magazine publisher Sarah Hale repeatedly requested the country set aside the last Thursday in November "to offer God our tribute of joy and gratitude for the blessings of the year." On the heels of the Battle of Gettysburg, President Abraham Lincoln agreed, officially proclaiming a national day of Thanksgiving. Each year, Americans suspend most regular routines, share fellowship with family and friends, and offer thanksgiving for the blessings of Almighty God. The very things we consider routine likely form the basis of lives for which we are rightly grateful. Often, when we take these blessings for granted, we aren't so much insensitive as we've simply become accustomed to our way of life. Significantly, a day of targeted recognition helps usher in the season of Advent, signaling the celebration of Christ's coming. God has actively intervened in the ways of man.

"Shepherd of Israel, listen, guide of the flock of Joseph! From your throne upon the cherubim reveal yourself. Stir up your power, come to save us. Turn again, Lord of hosts; look down from heaven and see; attend to this vine, the shoot your right hand has planted. Revive us, and we will call on your name." "You, Lord, are our father, our redeemer you are named forever. Too long have we been like those who do not rule, who do not bear your name. Oh, that you would rend the heavens and come down, with the mountains quaking before you." The words of the Psalmist and the Old Testament prophet Isaiah remind us that the God who created the heavens and the earth rends the heavens and has become directly involved, intervening personally in the things of man. The great intervention? The Incarnation, the coming of the divine Christ child. This Thanksgiving, we are grateful for what has come to us, and for the One who is coming.

"Instead of complaining that God has hidden Himself, we should give Him thanks for having revealed so much of Himself."

~ Blaise Pascal ~

Bulletin Blurbs

The following messages can be appropriately inserted into your weekly bulletin:

PLEASE REMEMBER OUR PARISH !

Thanksgiving and holy Advent.

The first and last articles included in this issue have been reprinted courtesy of the Diocese of Baton Rouge. I hope you enjoy them as much as I did.

Lastly, thanks again to those parishes who hosted Estate Planning (will) Seminars this year. I am convinced that your efforts will produce much fruit in the long-term. And, as you prepare your calendars for next year, consider hosting a seminar at your parish.

P.S. Remember to place the enclosed "blurbs" in your bulletins or newsletters!

Keep planting seeds!

Ministry Quicklinks

[Rockford Stewardship web](#)
[Catholic Foundation web](#)

Many of you make end-of-year contributions outside the parish because we have not asked for your help. Bequests to our parish, gifts of real estate and life insurance, stocks, bonds and certificates of deposit can perpetuate your ideals and faith here in our parish. Please remember the ongoing and long range needs which exist at (name of parish). Contact (insert pastor's name) for specific areas which could benefit from your gift.

ENDOW YOUR GIFT

By making a planned gift to our endowment, you'll be providing ongoing financial support - forever. This is a wonderful way to demonstrate your stewardship and pass on your faith and love for (insert parish name). Contact (insert pastor's name) to learn more. Your faith is worth passing on...

IRA ROLLOVER PROVISION EXTENDED FOR 2008 AND 2009

If you are 70½ and older and want to make a gift to [parish name], consider taking advantage of the recent extension of the IRA Charitable Rollover provision by donating IRA assets and avoid paying income tax on the IRA withdrawal. To learn more, contact your financial or tax advisor.

IRA Charitable Rollover

As I indicated in my last e-Newsletter, President Bush signed into law the *Emergency Economic Stabilization Act of 2008*. This \$700 billion provision, which will attempt to stabilize the U.S. economy, includes an extension of the IRA Charitable Rollover. The extension allows parishioners who are 70½ and older to contribute up to \$100,000 from their IRAs to their parish "tax-free" through both the 2008 and 2009 tax years.

I strongly recommend that you encourage charitable rollover donations as a method of end-of-year giving for those who qualify.

Be Prepared. Plan Ahead.

Be prepared. The forthright two-word Boy Scout motto is as recognizable as any organizational credo. "As much as possible, be prepared for the unforeseen, the inevitable surprise, the unplanned event." Wise and sensible, the motto has served generations of scouts quite well, and has helped former scouts address the need for planning and preparation in adult, family, community and business concerns, too. One wonders if scouts were among those prepared for recent upheavals in financial markets. When global financial systems transported investors on an unexpectedly brutal carnival ride, hosts of people proclaimed, "We didn't buy a ticket for this." It seems few saw this coming, though the need for sensible planning and preparation is as old as time.

A New Testament parable of Jesus, one found only in the Gospel of St. Matthew, relates the importance of planning ahead. The unique historic tale, as recorded in the twenty-fifth chapter, refers to the custom of bridesmaids and others greeting a bridegroom on the road as he traveled to the site of his wedding. Long journeys required wise advance planning. Oil supplies, the basic fuel for a simple lamp, would run low, and ready replacement fuel might be difficult to find en route. The wise planned ahead; the foolish did not. "The kingdom of heaven will be like ten virgins who took their lamps and went out to meet the bridegroom. Five of them were foolish and five were wise. The foolish ones, when taking their lamps, brought no oil with them, but the wise brought flasks of oil with

their lamps." The outcome is predictable.

"Since the bridegroom was long delayed, they all became drowsy and fell asleep." Those with ample supplies of oil were able to awaken and make the way for the trip clear, but the others were forced to try and purchase additional oil in the middle of the night. "While they went off to buy it, the bridegroom came and those who were ready went into the wedding feast with him. Then the door was locked." "Stay awake," Jesus cautioned, "for you know neither the day nor the hour." A picture of his return, the underlying theme is transferable to much of life.

Too much time, money and energy are unwisely invested in attempts to correct problems that should have been anticipated. Oil lamps require oil. Complex activities, in particular, require thoughtful planning and preparation. Good and wise stewards plan ahead, not hoarding supplies, but simply addressing personal and family needs long term. Those with a ready supply not only take care of themselves, but find they are better prepared to do the same for others. Unexpected events, just as with the Savior's return, are greeted best by those who are prepared-those with enough oil to keep their lamps burning.

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