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Planned Giving News



Office of Stewardship Development

September 2009

Dear Greg,

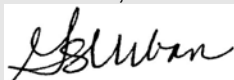
It's September. Summer is over and there is continuing talk of health care reform. I missed the president's talk last night, but I've heard some of the sound bites. Isn't it interesting that so many (politicians, as well as the public) can choose to disagree so much about one issue and fail to realize how important health care reform is to all of us? Is the current system broken? I really don't know. The one thing I do know, however, is that health care coverage is becoming unaffordable for more and more Americans (us!). If you doubt this, just ask your employer about the insurance premiums paid on your behalf for coverage. And too, those (families) who have lost their jobs and are struggling to pay individual premiums. Having had experience in managing a small business for many years, I've seen the premiums escalate at a rate many times the rate of inflation. It is staggering... And with growing unemployment levels, the problem is only getting worse.

Do we realize that this issue is more than just an issue about what it will cost taxpayers? Health care reform is a social justice issue that the U.S. Bishops have been advocating for years. I have included this month an article from Dan Conway, which looks at health care reform from a stewardship perspective. I hope you find it interesting and enlightening.

On a different topic, the stock market has continued to gain ground over the past few months. This is good news for participants in the Catholic Foundation endowment program. Fiscal-year-end adjustments to participant accounts reflecting new fund choices (if applicable) and checks to those who requested earnings withdrawals should be completed within the next several days. At the last Foundation meeting, the board passed a resolution modifying the retained earnings policy. For those participants who have been placing current earnings into retained earnings (saving for future withdrawals) before the market collapse, this change should make some of these earnings available for withdrawal. I will be sharing details with participants on this soon.

Lastly, I might sound like a broken record, but I want to again encourage you to plan and hold a Will (Estate Planning) Seminar at your parish this fall. It is vital to send your parishioners the message to remember the parish in their estate plan on a regular basis. Promoting a Will Seminar in your bulletin and at Mass with an announcement will help, even if the final seminar attendance is not up to expectations. And to save you money, I have included a discount coupon below!

God bless,



Health care reform: a stewardship perspective

The Gospel of St. Luke presents Jesus healing ten lepers, of whom only one, a Samaritan and therefore a foreigner, returned to thank him. The Lord said to him, "Rise and go your way; your faith has made you well." (Luke 17:19 quoted by Pope Benedict XVI during his Angelus meditation October 14, 2007)

Life is a gift from God. Good health is the physical expression of that gift. In the Gospel, Jesus connects wellness (or wholeness) with faith. He teaches us - sometimes dramatically - that physical health and spiritual health are interrelated.

Pope Benedict XVI reminds us that there are two levels of healing. First, there is physical healing, which concerns the proper functioning of the body and all its various systems. Secondly, there is the much-needed healing of the mind and heart (or soul), which concerns the whole person. Another term for this second, more profound, level of healing is salvation. The healing power of Jesus brings salvation, as well as physical health, because he touches our hearts and revives our souls. "Rise and go your way; your faith has saved you," the Lord says to the grateful leper and to us.

In this familiar Gospel story, only one of the ten lepers (a foreigner) returned to say thank you. "Those who, like the healed Samaritan, know how to say thank you," the Holy Father says, "show that they do not consider everything as their due but as a gift that comes ultimately from God, even when it arrives through men and women or through nature." Gratitude is the gateway to healing. It opens our hearts to the recognition that everything is a gift. And, as the pope says, "What a treasure is hidden in two small words: thank you!"

What has this to do with health care reform? Everything. Health is a gift, but health care is a responsibility. As Christian stewards, we are called to say thank you for God's gift of life by accepting responsibility for the health and human dignity of all our sisters and brothers. We are called to share generously with others, especially the poor and the sick, out of gratitude to God. And the Lord tells us, quite forcefully, that what we do to assist the poor and the sick, the hungry and the homeless, and all who are in emotional or spiritual need, we do to him, for him and with him.

With this in mind, the Catholic bishops of the United States have given us the following guidelines for health care reform that is consistent with Catholic social teaching:

- No health care reform legislation or policy will be truly effective unless it deals with the whole person in all his or her human dignity. That is why access to quality health care must be truly universal, and not selective, and why it must respect life wholly and completely from the moment of conception to the experience of natural death.
- No health care legislation or policy will succeed in transforming our current broken system unless it provides for the needs of the poor and of legal immigrants (the lepers and Samaritans of our day).
- No reform measures will provide for the common good and the diversity of our society unless they provide for the freedom of conscience of health care workers (allowing them to say "no" to immoral or unethical procedures without impunity).
- No private or public options for insuring health care coverage can succeed in the long run unless costs are controlled and shared equitably.

Health care reform is a stewardship issue. It challenges us to take care of the gifts of life and health; to share the costly burden of care especially on behalf of the poor; and to manage wisely and well the resources available to us through medical and health care personnel, through private insurers and government agencies, and through hospitals and other organizations dedicated to the healing arts.

Whatever we do, as disciples of Jesus Christ and as stewards of all his gifts, we must work to ensure respect for life and dignity, and universal access for all. This is what Jesus did during his life among us. This is what he calls us to do if we wish to follow him -- and make his saving grace available to the men and women of our day.

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Bulletin Blurbs

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

REMEMBER YOUR PARISH!

Many parishioners make contributions outside the parish because we have not asked you 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 own parish. Please remember the ongoing and long range needs which exist here at (name of parish). Contact us for specific areas which could benefit from your gift.

ENDOWED GIFTS

By making a planned gift to our endowment, you'll be providing perpetual financial support. It's a wonderful way to demonstrate your stewardship and pass on your faith and love for (insert parish name). Contact the office to learn more. Isn't your faith worth passing on?

IRA CHARITABLE ROLLOVER EXTENDED FOR 2009

If you are 70½ and older and want to make a gift to [parish name], then take advantage of the extension of the IRA Charitable Rollover and donate your IRA assets while avoiding income tax on the IRA withdrawal. To learn more, call the Office of Planned Giving at 815-399-4300 x358 or email your inquiry to gurban@rockforddiocese.org.

Diocese of Rockford - Planned Giving Office / The Catholic Foundation
Phone: 815-399-4300 x358

**Save
25%**

This coupon is good for a discount on conducting a wills seminar at your parish. The Diocesan Stewardship Development Office offers a free guide providing tips for holding these seminars. There is no charge for this service. So what are you waiting for? Call me today to find out how easy it is to hold a seminar following our easy step-by-step instructions. And save 25% off of free, call 815-399-4300 x358 now!

Offer Expires: October 13, 2009

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