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Planned Giving News



Office of Stewardship Development

February / March 2010

Dear Friend,

We are deep into the season of Lent 2010. I pray that you are using this time to return to the basics - reflecting on our core Catholic Christian values, beliefs and simplicity of life. Lent should be a time of bringing God back to the center of our lives. How easy it is to get distracted by the noise level of the world around us.

As has become the custom, I have included below some snippets that I encourage you to place in your parish bulletins from time to time. It is good to repetitively plant seeds in your parishioner's minds of remembering the Church in their estate plan. And while I'm on this topic, if you haven't sponsored a *will seminar* at your parish recently, I would encourage you to seriously consider this. Give me a call or send me an email.

I have included in this issue an article authored by Dan Conway. In it he makes the comparison of a practicing Catholic to an Olympic athlete. In it he states "...we have to reach for perfection in order to move beyond the status quo and make real progress in our spiritual journeys." Do we need to strive to be perfect as God is perfect? I hope you enjoy this article.

God bless,



Greg Urban

Bulletin Blurbs

- More and more Catholic families are making substantial gifts to parish endowment funds in memory of parents and other relatives. Contact a member of the Stewardship Committee or _____ to establish a memorial fund in the name of your parents.
- Estate planning is the Way to Continue Your Life's Work. It is vital that you invest some time to insure that your life's efforts will continue in the hands of the causes and people who will most treasure your gifts. Your attorney in conjunction with your accountant will prepare a proper will

and make other arrangements for the easy, inexpensive transfer of your estate.

- Planning for death is as natural for the Christian as planning for life. As stated in 1 Timothy 5:8, ...if anyone does not take care of his own, and especially of his household; he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever. Having a will IS good stewardship. Take care of your family.

Practicing Our Faith Means Seeking Perfection in the Spiritual Life

"You should write about the Winter Olympics," my friend said.

"But I'm not a sports writer."

"I don't mean you should write about sports. Write about the discipline and sacrifices made by the athletes and their families. That's stewardship of talent in a big way!"

"I agree," I said. "In order to develop our talents and reach the potential that God gave each of us, we have to practice and make sacrifices. We see this forcefully with athletes, but it's also true for all of us -- no matter what skills or abilities God has given us."



"Imagine the sacrifices that Olympic athletes and their families make," my friend said. "It's incredible. One family relocated to Colorado just so their daughter could ski race. Many borrow money and totally rearrange their family lives to support and assist a child who is an athlete in training."

"I sometimes wonder if it's worth it," I said.

"You're missing the point," my friend said. "Practice and discipline are needed in every aspect of life. And if God has given a child special talents, it's important to develop them -- no matter how many sacrifices are required."

"I agree. It's just that our tendency to focus exclusively on sports seems disproportionate to me."

"True," said my friend. "We can overdo just about anything. But rigorous discipline is also needed in the arts, in medicine and in every other profession -- including writing. You're a better writer when you practice aren't you?"

"I hope so. I know that it doesn't take long for me to become rusty when I neglect my writing."

"Practice, sacrifice and discipline are essential to good health and successful living," my friend said.

"Imagine how healthy and happy we'd be if we really practiced good living habits every day!"

"Cultivating our gifts so that we can share them generously with others is what responsible stewardship is all about," I said. "So is practicing our faith."

"Exactly. *Practicing our faith* is a very important concept," my friend insisted. "Most of the time when we refer to a 'practicing Catholic' we mean someone who attends Mass regularly, receives the sacraments and tries to live the faith on a daily basis. That's certainly important, but I like to think that Catholics who are really practicing their faith are doing more than the minimum, or just what's expected of them. They are like Olympic athletes who are working hard to achieve some degree of perfection. No true athlete is ever completely satisfied. There's always a new threshold to reach, a new record to break and new opportunities to grow. Shouldn't we practicing Catholics have the same passion for success in our spiritual lives?"

"That's how saints practice their faith," I said.

"Yes! But aren't we all invited - challenged - to become saints, grow in holiness and reach our full potential as God's special children?"

"That's why we have Lent," I said. "It's a form of spiritual spring training."

"One of the reasons I like the Winter Olympics so much," my friend said, "is because we get to experience obscure winter sports that are rarely seen otherwise. That makes us aware of skills and talents that we don't think about very often. And we get to meet highly talented athletes who will never become superstars or be awarded multimillion dollar contracts. These are the quiet heroes of the sports world. Most saints are just like these hard-working, self-sacrificing and humble athletes. They are going for something much greater than gold. They seek perfection in the spiritual life."

"I'm not sure we ever achieve perfection in the spiritual life," I said. "We can achieve progress, not perfection."

"True, but we have to reach for perfection in order to move beyond the status quo and make real progress in our spiritual journeys. We're like most Olympic athletes," my friend said. "Very few ever bring home a gold medal, but if they really work at it, day-in and day-out, they can achieve the measure of perfection that God intends for each of them."

"That makes them faithful stewards of a truly remarkable set of skills and talents," I said. "Maybe I should write about the Winter Olympics."

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