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Planned Giving News



Office of Stewardship Development

April 2010

Dear Reader,

Welcome to spring! We've had a cold winter this year and it is good that the weather outside is improving, at least here in the midwest. Investments in the Catholic Foundation have also experienced favorable weather as the Growth Fund was up 3.8% and the Fixed Income Fund was up 4.4% for the quarter ending March 31, 2010. For the year so far, the Growth Fund is up 29% and the Fixed Income Fund is up 9%. Join me in praying that this last quarter of our fiscal year continues to be good to us.

I have begun an effort to personally visit parish pastors and administrators at their finance council meetings. At these meetings I have been explaining several recent changes in the Foundation. These include our new retained earnings policy and an update on several new investment managers the board has hired. Additionally, these meetings give me a opportunity to answer questions about your Foundation accounts. I thank those parishes I've visited for being most gracious to me and I look forward to visiting your parish in the near future.

I have included below some announcements that I encourage you to place into your weekly parish bulletins. Planting seeds in your parishioner's minds of remembering your parish in their estate plan WILL yield fruit in the long-term. In that light, I am encouraged that more parishes have begun scheduling Will Seminars. I am convinced these parishes will reap a bountiful harvest. If you haven't sponsored a Will Seminar at your parish within the last two years, I encourage you to seriously consider doing so.

Lastly, I have included below an article for reflection. In it Jesus calls Peter to "Feed My Lambs" and "Feed My Sheep." Can and do you say "yes" to the incredible privilege of extending the love of Christ to a world in need?

God bless,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Greg Urban". The signature is written in a cursive style.

Greg Urban

Bulletin Blurbs

- Consider your Christian responsibility to yourself, your family, and to God to be a wise steward of the gifts God has given you. How will your gifts (assets) be passed on to those you love and care for when you die? Planning now will help those we love live peacefully in the future. Call Deacon Greg Urban at The Catholic Foundation at 815-399-4300 to learn how you can pass on this love to your family. We at (insert parish name) through our gifts to diocesan stewardship help employ Greg to serve us in the area of planned giving. Take advantage of this great service.
 - 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.
 - Create retirement income as you provide for perpetual support of our faith community. A Deferred Gift Annuity for our endowment lets you pass on your Catholic heritage, reduce taxes, and plan for your retirement. Being a good steward of the gifts you have been given is important to your family and your extended faith family here at (insert parish). Call The Catholic Foundation at 815-399-4300 and learn how you can continue to live out stewardship.
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Feed My Sheep ... Be My Witnesses

The risen Christ appeared to the apostles and other witnesses numerous times in the weeks that followed his crucifixion and resurrection. . As revealed in the first chapter of the Acts of the Apostles, "He presented himself alive to them by many proofs after he had suffered, appearing to them during forty days and speaking about the kingdom of God." They watched his miraculous ascension, and remained looking up into heaven until two heavenly beings suggested they attend to other things: "As they were looking on, he was lifted up, and a cloud took him from their sight. While they were looking intently at the sky as he was going, suddenly two men dressed in white garments stood beside them." Their remarks ultimately directed the disciples into the specific works of ministry to which the Lord had called them.

We rightly maintain a vision of the heavens still, a perspective that directs our gaze to the throne of God and the seat of Jesus Christ, our heavenly advocate. To ensure our focus also preserves attention on the tasks at hand, we likewise turn that gaze outward-to those in need and to the many to whom God has directed our works of service and ministry. At the close of the Gospel of St. John, Jesus spoke clearly to St. Peter about this call, prompting the apostle to meet the needs of others: " 'Feed my lambs. Tend my sheep. Feed my sheep.' " Then, before he ascended, Jesus addressed St. Peter and the others again, and said, " 'You will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, throughout Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.' "

The temptation to reduce profound and complex truths to simple and basic elements can yield frail phrases that fail to capture the mystery and wonder of our faith. At times, though, there is wisdom in considering the informative value resident in just a few words of weighty instruction. To St. Peter, Jesus said, "Feed my sheep." And, to the entire group of loyal followers, the Lord said, "Be my witnesses." Those six words capture something of the gift of service to which God calls every parishioner. "Feed my sheep "-love, provide meaningful care for, address the needs of those within the fold who are part of the Church family. Plus, as we know "lambs" include lost sheep-even those who have wandered away-we serve as witnesses to the faith in which we've been baptized, and say 'yes' to the incredible privilege of extending the love of Christ to a world in need. From the first century to today, the Church has witnessed to that love. "Feed my sheep. Be my witnesses." Two phrases, only six words. But words filled with faith-shaping purpose for all those willing to look not only heavenward but outward, serving as willing conduits of faith to a world that needs the love, mercy, grace and truth Jesus entrusted to the Church.

Courtesy of Stewardship News (Used with Permission)

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