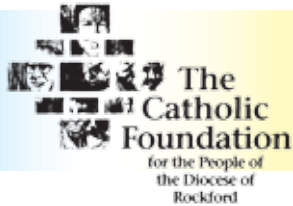


STEWARDSHIP

A WAY OF LIFE IN THE ROCKFORD DIOCESE



Fall 2010



Perpetual Light Society News

2010 Perpetual Light Society Mass and Brunch Welcomes 45 Attendees

Bishop Thomas G. Doran welcomed and thanked members of the Perpetual Light Society for their planned gifts to the Church at a Mass and brunch held on September 8. In case you missed the news article in the September 17 issue of The Observer, it is reprinted below. We hope that the 130 members who were not able to join us for this year's Mass and brunch will be able to join us at the next one. If you have named your parish or a diocesan organization in your will or estate plan and would like to join the Society, please call the Office of Planned Giving at 815-399-4300. ☩

Perpetual Light members share gifts with church

BY AMANDA HUDSON, NEWS EDITOR

(Reprinted with permission)

ROCKFORD—Father Carl Beekman, diocesan director of vocations, shared how “Love is in the details” in his homily at a Mass for members of the Perpetual Light Society on Sept. 8, the feast of the Birth of the Blessed Virgin Mary, held at St. Rita Parish in Rockford.

Speaking of how SS. Joachim and Ann, Mary's parents, organized their material goods with God in mind, he said that God “works through (the) generations until He comes again in glory.”

In his homily and talk at the brunch that followed, Father Beekman spoke about growing one's soul, how “generosity flows from that (growth)” and that giving in an ordered way is an exterior sign of love for the church and of a sense of awe and wonder at the gifts that God has first given to us.

Those gathered for the Mass are people who care about the future and are giving in that kind of ordered way.

Mary Connors of Rockford believes her planned giving to the church is a natural extension of what she learned and observed in her family growing up. “The church has done a lot for all of us through all our lives,” she says. “I know how much it means to me.”

Msgr. Gerald Kobbeman, pastor of St. Rita Parish in Rockford, says that his planned gift “keeps my faith in perspective. It's a way to carry on the faith for future generations (and) a way for me to put the diocese and (my parish) as priorities.”

Willis and Linda Weiler are members of St. Joseph Parish in Elgin. Linda points out the many blessings received from the church in their lives. Her husband approaches the subject of planned giving in a practical manner.

“The nature of money is that it is the material to help the function of a diverse society,” he says. “The church, by its nature, is a diverse society. If we don't support it, it can't carry out its task ... its mission to bring Christ into the world.” Citing the physical structures of a church to parish general expenses, “we have to support our parishes,” he says.

Greg Urban, director of planned giving for the diocese, thanked the men and women gathered for their “charity for the future of the diocese.”

Bishop Thomas G. Doran joined the gathering and also expressed his thanks. “These are difficult times to be generous,” he said after noting the legacy that the Blessed Mother left the church. Being generous gives “immense rewards for everlasting life,” he added, “and that is my prayer for you.”



The Perpetual Light Society was established in 1996 by Bishop Doran to thank and celebrate with those parishioners who remember the church in their will or estate plan. Everyone who makes a significant planned or endowed gift to a parish or school, is automatically eligible for membership in the Perpetual Light Society. Members receive a certificate from Bishop Doran, a semiannual newsletter called Perpetual Light and an invitation to this Mass and brunch, which are held from time-to-time. ☩

International Catholic Stewardship Conference

By Bob Pfundstein, Director of Parish Stewardship

Diocese of Rockford Makes a Splash in San Diego

On September 19th through 22nd twenty-three members of the Diocese, representing 15 parishes, attended the International Catholic Stewardship Conference in San Diego.

There were 11 priests, 6 business managers, 3 parish stewardship committee chairpersons and 3 Diocesan representatives choosing from 80 different sessions in 10 Tracks. These tracks included: Introduction to Christian Stewardship; Reinvigorating Parish Stewardship; Practical Stewardship; Living the Pastoral Letter; Nivel En Español; Business Managers Track; Primer for Diocesan Professionals; Advanced Issues for diocesan Professionals; Diocesan Director Forum; Diocesan Foundations and Planned Giving.



If you look closely at the photo above and recognize someone from your parish or a neighboring parish, ask them about their experience at the conference. To date we have only heard positive feedback from all those who attended. A couple of participants wrote:

Networking with others who share my love of stewardship is by itself inspiring. The session titled "Caretakers of God's Business" drove home the basics of being wise stewards with that in which we have been entrusted as well as new ways to improve on the basics.


Lisa Bales - Holy Family Parish, Rockford

As a newcomer to a leadership position for the Stewardship movement in our Parish, the ICSC Conference, Track 1 program, was ideal for providing information on the formation, and development of Stewardship in the Parish. The speakers were excellent and I am anxious to attend in future years...

Jerry Wiland - St Charles Borromeo Parish, Hampshire

As the attendees gather later this fall we will have additional feedback as to how the conference was able to affect the parish stewardship efforts in practical ways. Those ideas will be shared in the next newsletter.

Just a reminder:

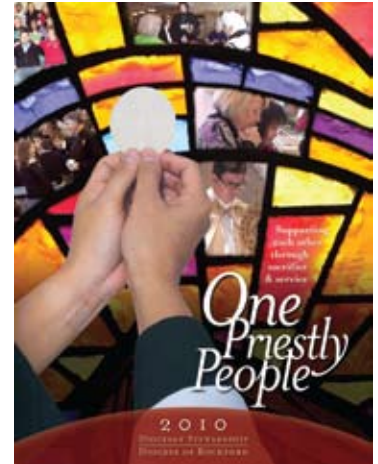
If this sounds like a conference you would like to attend, start planning and saving for the 2011 conference which will be held in Orlando, Florida from October 23rd to 26th. 

Diocesan Stewardship 2010



By David Hougan, Diocesan Director of Stewardship Development

Diocesan Stewardship 2010 Status Report
 September 28, 2010
 compared September 28, 2009
 (Pledge Sunday was May 2, 2010)



Diocesan Stewardship Goal

2010	\$6,360,756
2009	\$6,360,756

Pledged

2010	\$6,007,406 – 94.5% of 2010 goal
2009	\$6,022,522 - 94.7% of 2009 goal

Donors

2010	25,769
2009	26,490

Payments

2010	\$3,930,116
2009	\$3,980,214

Average Pledge

2010	\$233.13
2009	\$227.35

Parishes at Goal by Pledges

2010	46
2009	49

Notes:

- 1) As of now, there are 6,600 people in all parishes who pledged last year \$1,126,675 and paid \$922,905 who have not pledged this year. Currently we are \$353,049 below goal. Hopefully many of these will respond before the end of the year.
- 2) Pledges and payments are down somewhat comparing this year to last year at this time. A concern is the lower number of donors. The difficult economy and unemployment are the two major reasons given by donors themselves and parish leaders.
- 3) Besides the 46 parishes over goal by pledges, there are 17 parishes at 90-99%; and 19 at 80-89% of goal. Eight parishes in the 90% or better group are very close to reaching their goal. Five are very close of meeting goal.
- 4) There are 41 parishes which have dramatically increased the amount of pledging. One parish \$61,825 more; another \$48,000; and four with increases of \$17,000, \$15,000, \$14,000 and \$12,000.
- 5) There are 73 parishes opting to participate in this year's telephone follow-up. We are calling 8,276 people who have a prior giving history but who have not made a gift in 2010. To date we have received 858 gifts totaling \$99,272.
- 6) In October after the calling, the parishes below their goal will be encouraged to try one more parish follow-up mailing.
- 7) The Office of Stewardship Development can provide parishes with the following materials for a Fall follow-up to non responding members:
 - pre-printed pledge cards of either all of your non-respondents or just those with a giving history
 - in-church envelopes, if you prefer
 - labels for those to whom you are mailing
 - return envelopes

For more information, contact David Hougan, Diocesan Director, Office of Stewardship Development at 815-399-4300 or dhougan@rockforddiocese.org



By Deacon Greg Urban, Director of Planned Giving

Perpetual Light News

Is it time your parish considered having a Will Seminar?

How much did your parish receive from bequests last year? How about the year before? It is unlikely that your parish will receive bequests if you don't regularly ask for them. Does parish leadership feel uncomfortable approaching people with this type of request? Most of the time, the answer is yes. So how can parish leadership accomplish this in a less intimidating way? A Will Seminar!

At these gatherings we combine an educational seminar conducted by a local estate planning attorney (of your choosing) along with a short period describing gifting opportunities and how your parishioners might leave the Church (parish) in their will or trust.

November is traditionally Wills Awareness Month in our diocese and we currently have openings to offer these seminars. They are typically a little over an hour in length and can be held during the week (day or evening) or on a weekend. We encourage parishes to hold these seminars every other year.

Call Deacon Greg at 815-399-4300 or email him at gurban@rockforddiocese.org and ask for a complete guide with instructions on how to plan a seminar at your parish.



End of Year Gifts



Keep an eye out for the End of Year Giving flyer that will be sent to every parish in mid-November. We encourage you to reprint and include this flyer as an insert to your bulletin near the Thanksgiving holiday or anytime between Thanksgiving and Christmas. This is an excellent time of year as our thoughts turn to gratitude for the gifts God has graciously given us. If you would like the flyer in electronic format for insertion directly in your bulletin, you can download it from the stewardship website at www.stewardshiprockford.org or send an e-mail request to gurban@rockforddiocese.org.

Does Your Will Work?



Some wills won't. For example, if your state requires the signatures of two disinterested witnesses and a beneficiary of your will signs as a witness, your will may not work.

A will that's out of step with your other estate-planning documents may not work either. Let's say your will dictates that your entire estate is to pass to your spouse and yet your life insurance policy indicates a different beneficiary. Will your will supersede your policy and redirect the insurance proceeds to your spouse? Probably not.

An out-of-date will that fails to take full advantage of current estate tax law may not work well either. It could cost thousands in added taxes. Nor can you feel confident in a will that has not been updated to reflect major changes in your family life or financial affairs.

Does your will accomplish everything you want it to do? Is it up-to-date? Is it valid? Do you even have a will?

We want you to have the peace of mind that comes from knowing you have a valid estate plan. We want you to have a will that works well for you. And, frankly, one that works for us – one that includes a bequest to your parish and/or favorite Catholic organization.

It's amazing how often people say, "I never thought about making a charitable gift through my will. It just never occurred to me."

When you name your parish or a Catholic Foundation Endowment in your will (or living trust) to receive a specific amount or a percentage of your estate, you make one final gift – your crowning gift – to an organization you have supported during your life. You declare in your Last Will and Testament that you believe in the mission of Catholic Church and that you want a portion of your accumulated assets to be invested in furthering God's good work through this worthy cause.

If you have arranged for an estate gift through a will or other transfer document, we would like to know so we can thank you while you are here. Bishop Doran invites you to join the Perpetual Light Society so he may express appreciation for your confidence in our future. We want to honor you for your prudent planning. Of course, if you wish, we will treat news of your bequest plans anonymously.

As always, we urge you to consult with an estate-planning attorney or other qualified advisor regarding a will, a living trust or whatever else may best suit your needs. Sound professional help will contribute to your peace of mind – and that of your family.

We invite you to call our planned giving office at 815-399-4300 for the proper wording to leave your parish or the Diocese in your estate plan. You may also get this information through our website at www.stewardshiprockford.org. We look forward to hearing from you soon. †



By Bob Pfundstein, Director of Parish Stewardship

The third characteristic of a Christian steward, as written by the U.S. Bishops' is that "we share God's gifts lovingly in justice with others." Because we have unique gifts and belong to a larger community, we can use our gifts to build God's kingdom here on earth. Our gifts shared with others in our family, our neighborhood, our parish, our city, our country and the world are a reflection of the love and justice generously provided by our Creator.

Have you recognized the gifts God has given you? Have you taken care of and developed those gifts? Are you ready to share those gifts with others justly and lovingly? This is the chance to review our relationship with God and our faith. Sharing a gift allows us the freedom to be unselfish. It allows us to truly help others who have needs. It may be as simple as the gift of time as we listen to someone in need, or as complicated as determining what we treasure that we are willing to let go for the benefit of others. In the case of God, all that we have is a gift of the Creator. Knowing this fact, how do we share those gifts justly? Living our faith daily challenges us to respond to God's call and share the blessings we have with others. Growing as stewards offers us the opportunity to expand our treasures of faith. It gives us the gift of serving the poor, the downcast, the suffering and it allows those who are in need to receive resources to live with less burdens and more dignity. May God continue to bless our stewardship efforts and help us to know the love he offers unconditionally through Jesus Christ.

Parishes throughout the Diocese have been given all of the gifts they need to thrive in their local communities and become the beacon of Jesus Christ. The Office of Stewardship Development has given each of the parishes materials to assist their parishioners to ignite or polish that light for all to see. In late July each parish was sent materials to help them educate their parishioners in the everyday stewardship attitude of living as a disciple of Jesus Christ. The 2010 theme, "Sharing God's Gifts in Justice & Love" was used in all the materials.

One of the most important aspects of parish stewardship is to prepare and share a consistent message. Stewardship is one of the avenues for living out the deep faith that many of our members hold. By offering them opportunities to share their faith through volunteering at the parish or at other worthy causes and offering their financial support, we give them ways to connect their faith to their every day responsibilities.

In the next few months, I will be contacting each parish to determine how the materials were used this year and what materials would benefit the parishes next year. This contact will be made via survey and also through personal visits to many parishes. If you would like to schedule a time to discuss parish stewardship and how your parish could become better as stewards of God's gifts, please contact Bob Pfundstein at (815)399-4300 ext 356 or e-mail rfundstein@rockforddiocese.org.

