

Remember the Church in your will.

Have you ever heard that phrase? I bet that someplace and sometime over the years, you may have run across this statement. Maybe you've seen it on the back of an envelope or in a newsletter?

Have you ever wondered if anyone ever does this? Does anyone ever really remember their parish, or their favorite Catholic charity, or the high school they graduated from, in their will?

The simple answer is yes. The Church has received many generous bequests from a number of estates over the years. Many Catholics have determined that they wish to provide for the Church through a gift from their estate. Yet I've heard it said many times before that sometimes, people just don't consider charitable giving when deciding how to make best use of their hard earned earthly assets.

So, how would it work if someone desired to make a gift to the Church in his or her will?

Instead of using a fictitious example, let's talk about a real life case. In 1992, three sisters – Edith, Katherine and Margaret Erker, having lived in east Wichita for a number of years and belonging to the Church of the Magdalen parish, walked into their attorney's office and drafted a document that accounted for how their assets would be disposed of upon their death. None of the sisters had ever married or had children.

But, they obviously had witnessed the many good and charitable works of several diocesan programs over the years. As they drafted a will with their attorney, they designated gifts to several charitable entities: their home parish - Church of the Magdalen, the Holy Family Special Needs Foundation (formerly known as the Holy Family Center), the Spiritual Life Center, Priests Retirement Center and to support the continuation of the St. Vincent de Paul ministries throughout the diocese. Two of the Sisters also designated a portion of their estate to two local universities.

When the last of the sisters died in April 2004, the intent, which they established 13 years earlier, was enacted. Their estate, valued at a very generous amount*, began to pay out. And because of the foresight and vision from three sisters, each of these ministries has been able to rest easier knowing that these gifts will ensure the continued growth of their programs and services.

Edith, Katherine and Margaret lived lives of stewards while on this earth. They gave of their time, talent and treasure. And now, after they have been called to a life with Christ, the accumulation of their earthly treasure will provide a lifetime of benefit to many in the diocese.

In living the life of stewardship, we give 10% of our treasure back to the Lord. Why not consider a gift in our will of 10% to the Church?

For confidential information on how to go about naming your parish or a diocesan entity in your will, contact Mike Wescott, Director of Development and Planned Giving, at 316-269-3915, e-mail him at plannedgiving@cdowk.org, or visit our web site at <http://plannedgiving.cdowk.org>.

*It is the policy of the Diocese of Wichita to not publicly disclose the amount of estate gifts unless given permission by the donor or family of the donor.