

Your Catholic Legacy

Newsletter of the Development Office



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Inside:

- Ensuring Your Will Is Valid 2
- A Gift of Faith 3
- Join the Legacy Society Today! 4



An Appetite for Giving

There already were a few children in line making a bowl of cereal or waiting for the toaster to pop when Jazmin Torres arrived at 7:42 a.m. at St. Paul's Basilica in the Corktown neighbourhood of East Toronto.

The St. Paul's Breakfast Club is part of Torres' morning ritual. Before the first bell, the 13-year-old Grade 8 student at the neighbouring St. Paul Catholic School likes to start her day with a healthy meal, work a bit on her homework, and kibitz with friends.

"This is a good place to come for so many reasons, but most importantly it's good because it saves money for families."

The St. Paul's Breakfast Club began in 1988 as a brainchild of the late Fr. Tom Day. Thanks to the support of benefactors like the late John Aubrey Bickley, it remains a vital part of the parish community 30 years later.

Fr. Day was the popular pastor of St. Paul's, the oldest Catholic church in Toronto, located a few blocks away from Toronto's Regent Park area, a public housing project built in the 1940s. He wanted the children who attended St. Paul's to

have the same advantages as other children around the city, and to him that meant having a good breakfast.

"This breakfast club has come a long way since its early years. Fr. Tom liked to serve the occasional helping of sausage or bacon to the kids, because he liked these foods too. But now we have nutritionists who visit us to make sure we're serving a healthy breakfast," said Blanca Amaya, a native of Guatemala, former Regent Park resident, and 26-year volunteer with the breakfast club.

This important program, however, would not be possible without donations from people like John Aubrey Bickley and his family.

John, who died a year ago in his 90th year, was always grateful to the boost he and his sister Susan received from their foster parents, Charlotte and Fred Johnson, in Windsor, Ont. That spirit of giving to children would stay with him a lifetime. The Johnsons treated them like their own children, even though they already had four young adult children of their own.

Photo: A volunteer and students at the St. Paul's Breakfast Club

Continued on page 4

Ensuring Your Will Is *Valid*

Have you ever wondered what it would be like to ‘speak’ from the grave and tell your loved ones how you would like things handled after you die? There is a means by which you can do exactly that, and that is none other than through your will. A will gives voice to your wishes after you have passed and may very well be your legally documented ‘doppelganger’.

A will is a legal document that allows you, the person making the will (called a testator), to name a person or persons who will carry out the terms of your will, settle your affairs, and assign how and to whom your assets (i.e., property, investments, money, personal affects) will be distributed after you pass. It likewise allows you to name a guardian to care for your loved ones, especially minor children or dependents who need special care and attention.

It stands to reason that, being a valuable document, you would want to ensure your will clearly and specifically meets all the requirements of validity, represents your free will, and can be executed properly. In Canada, there are three types of will: the formal will, holographic will and notarial will. The last one is only used in Quebec, while the first two are used elsewhere in the country:

| Type | Requirements for a will to be valid | Notes |
|-------------------------|---|--|
| Formal Will | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A typed or computer printed document • Testator must be mentally sound, should not be a minor • Dated and signed by testator in the presence of at least two witnesses (of legal age and they cannot be beneficiaries or spouses of beneficiaries) • Witnesses must also sign at the bottom of document and indicate their name, address and, if possible, occupation • All pages must be initialed by the testator and witnesses • After signing the will, the witnesses sign a written statement called an affidavit; wherein the witnesses must swear that they saw the testator sign the will, and that they have no reason to believe he/she was not capable of making the will | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A testator cannot just change the will by marking or crossing out certain parts of it; handwritten changes may not be valid specially if these were not signed by the testator and the two witnesses • Once signed and witnessed, the testator cannot add anything else below the signature portion of the will, as these will not be considered • Changes can be made by executing a typed codicil (an amending document that only changes part of the will) or by making an entirely new will that revokes the previous one • Testator must have testamentary capacity at the time he/she made the codicil or executed the new will |
| Holographic Will | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Less formal • Testator has to be mentally sound and should not be a minor • Must be entirely handwritten by the testator • Must be signed and dated • Does not require witnesses or affidavits, and can be prepared personally by the testator | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some provinces in Canada do not recognize a holographic will, e.g., British Columbia • Partially handwritten wills, such as fill-in-the-blank forms, do not meet the requirements of a holographic will • Typed documents cannot be incorporated as part of a holographic will • Handwritten alteration will only require the signature of the testator • Often subject to misinterpretation and challenge |

The structure of a Last Will and Testament in any jurisdiction in Canada is basically the same:

- It identifies the person creating the will
- Revokes all previous wills
- Names a trustee/executor to carry out the intentions of the will
- Itemizes the distribution of the estate
- Names guardians for minors (if applicable) and sets up trusts for those minors
- Has a signature page with space for the testator and two witnesses to sign (if applicable)

It should be noted that a video will, audio will or digital will is not considered as valid. The law still stipulates that, to be valid, a will must be on paper and signed and if applicable, witnessed.

If one’s estate is foreseen to be large and complex and involves specific nuances (e.g., blended families, beneficiaries not in Canada), it might be better to consider getting professional advice from a lawyer. A lawyer can help you understand what you need to do and why, and makes sure that your will follows the laws of your province. A lawyer can also make notes on your mental capacity to confirm that you are mentally fit when you made your will. It may be more costly than doing the will yourself, but the cost is well worth it when you consider the potential problems you’ll avoid. The last thing you would want to leave your loved ones with would be the headaches and heartaches of an invalid will.

Note: This article is for informational purposes only. It should not be construed as legal advice. Please seek independent legal advice tailored for your situation.

A Gift of Faith

The newly-renovated St. Thomas Aquinas Chapel at the Newman Centre Catholic Mission was the home of the ninth annual Legacy Society Mass and lunch. The Society was established as a special way to thank parishioners who have included their parish or favourite archdiocesan charity in their will or estate plan.

The venue was particularly chosen as the over 90 year-old chapel was recently renovated through a generous legacy gift by an anonymous donor. It was a particularly moving example of how a legacy gift would continue to bless others long after the giver has gone. This gift will touch countless souls who enter through the doors of the church.

His Eminence Thomas Cardinal Collins led the celebration of Mass together with Fr. Peter Turrone, Pastor and Executive Director of the Newman Centre. At the lunch, Legacy Society members listened attentively as Cardinal Collins gave insights on the life of Cardinal John Henry Newman, an Anglican priest and later a Catholic priest, who was a keen advocate of speaking out in the public



square in support of our faith – something the Newman Centre continues to espouse through its many initiatives, particularly the Faith and Reason lecture series.

Fr. Peter Turrone shared how the massive scope of the renovation had him bending down on his knees in prayer, invoking St. Joseph for assistance and help. Thirty days after doing the Holy Cloak novena, he received a call from the archdiocese that the chapel received the significant estate gift. It was truly a miracle and a gift from heaven.

The Newman Centre is a joyful, diverse and inviting university parish, providing students and the university community with an open home for everyone to grow in wholeness and holiness.

If you have included your parish or favourite archdiocesan charity in your estate plan and would enjoy being invited to future Legacy Society events, please let us know. We would be happy to include you!

To learn more about the Legacy Society of the Archdiocese of Toronto, contact the Development Office. Legacy Society members have the option of remaining anonymous.



Our Faith
Our Future

Join the Legacy Society

If you have included your parish or favourite archdiocesan charity in your will or estate plan, please let us know. Through the Legacy Society of the Archdiocese of Toronto, we would like to say a special thank you.

All Legacy Society members are invited to the Annual Legacy Society Lunch and Mass by the Archdiocese of Toronto. They will also receive:

- A hand-crafted cross, blessed by His Eminence Cardinal Thomas Collins.
- A personal letter from Cardinal Collins and a certificate acknowledging your intention.
- Invitations to Legacy Society functions and other special events.

Let your legacy be a testament of your faith! To learn more about the Legacy Society, please contact the Development Office at (416) 934-3411 / 1-800-263-2595 or development@archtoronto.org.

All calls are confidential. All Legacy Society members have the option of remaining anonymous.

An Appetite For Giving *Continued from page 1*



John and his sister were part of the Blitzkrieg Kids during World War II, who were sent out of harm's way in England to safe havens like Canada. He was 12 when he landed in Windsor and he immediately took to his new homeland by taking up ice skating.

Years later, he visited Kenya and Egypt as an engineering cadet with the British Army. He found time to climb Tanzania's Mount

Kilimanjaro in February 1952, just as England was mourning the death of King George VI. Bickley would later tell friends that when he ascended the mountain, England still had a King; when he descended, England had a Queen (Elizabeth II).

John later married a Windsor girl, Jean, and went on to become an extremely successful civil engineer, specializing in concrete technology. He moved to Toronto, but worked on projects in 16 different countries, including the CN Tower, Scotland's Forth Road Bridge and the Mangla Dam in Pakistan.

John and Jean had four children of their own, but tragedy struck when their youngest daughter Shirley-Anne was was struck and killed by a car in 1996. Thereafter, John would volunteer and provide generous financial support for the St. Paul's Breakfast

Club, and made sure the club was remembered in his will.

"I had the good fortune to accompany Dad to the breakfast club on two or three occasions when I was in Toronto visiting him. I was amazed at how happy he was while serving the children and how much he enjoyed the interaction and general hubbub during those early, early mornings. Given that I was an interloper, I was only allowed to dole out cereal. But it was an honor to do so and wonderful to see Dad so happy at what he repeatedly said was the best and most rewarding job he ever had in his life," said his son Jim.

Jean passed away in 2008 and John, after 52 years of marriage to her, found love again with Marilyn, a friend from Windsor of more than 40 years.

"I know John always was grateful for the way he was treated as a child by the Johnson family in a strange country that became his home," said Marilyn. "He was a wonderful, caring man and we both felt that children should not go to school hungry."

The above article is an excerpt taken from an original story written by Tim Wharnsby that appeared in the Catholic Register's Estate Planning Supplement, Nov. 4th issue. A special thank you to the Catholic Register for the permission to use it.

Your Catholic Legacy, the planned giving newsletter of the Archdiocese of Toronto, is a free publication that is produced twice a year to keep parishioners informed about issues related to estate planning and the many tax-smart and creative ways they can support their parishes and Archdiocesan charities. While all articles are researched and come from reliable sources, you should always consult your own advisors before making a gift.

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