

FALL 2023

# Generous Hearts

Inspired  
by the  
Spirit

*In this issue:*

BALDWINS ALIGNED ON FIRST FRUITS

CATHOLIC SCHOOLS FULL OF  
HOPEFUL POSSIBILITIES

SMART GIVING THROUGH YOUR IRA

CATHOLIC BUSINESS LEADERS SERIES

A publication brought to you by



**CATHOLIC  
FOUNDATION**  
of West Michigan



## Welcoming NEW TRUSTEE DONALD DUBA

The Catholic Foundation of West Michigan is pleased to announce the appointment of Donald Duba as a Trustee to a three-year term that began July 1, 2023. As principal attorney for Duba & Duba, PLLC, Donald has practiced law in his hometown of Grand Rapids since 1992 with areas of emphasis in mergers, acquisitions,

and real estate related business transactions. Having served in various volunteer capacities throughout the Church and wider community, Donald's desire to serve is extensive and consistent. He and his wife, Noreen, have five daughters and are parishioners at St. Anthony of Padua Parish in Grand Rapids. Welcome, Donald!

## Consortium of Catholic Foundations



In 2021, the Catholic Foundation of West Michigan became one of the founding members of the Consortium of Catholic Foundations. What began as an informal networking group has become the nation's only peer-to-peer led, chief executive learning community for Catholic foundations. As a self-governing body, the Consortium provides an executive-level community that accelerates leadership effectiveness and mission impact by sharing best practices, engaging in an interactive digital platform, and participating in an annual symposium. This community helps ensure future sustainability of their respective Catholic foundations, as well as prepare a financially vibrant Church for the next generation.

Since its founding, the Consortium has grown to 51 members in 28 states with assets totaling \$4.3 billion. In spring 2023, members elected Greg Deja to serve a three-year term on the nine-member governing committee through fall 2026.



### From the Executive Director

Dear Friends,

It's amazing how meaningful relationships often begin with the smallest gesture or the simplest common denominator. I'm pleased to see the ways in which the Catholic Foundation continues to nurture relationships in the community, and it's a joy to watch them grow through faithful stewardship, a spirit of generosity, and a sense of mission.

The staff, board of trustees, and I look forward to having more conversations with people interested in learning more about the Foundation: donors, clergy, Catholic school leaders, professional advisors, and charitable organizations. Through this work, we're not only fostering important relationships, but we're building bridges between charitably minded people and organizations that represent the causes they care deeply about.

When those connections occur with the help of the Holy Spirit, wonderful things happen. Leaky roofs are patched. Counseling services and material goods are available for women with unplanned pregnancies. Mission trips are coordinated and funded. Families can afford Catholic schools. Food and clothing are provided to people in need of life's most basic essentials.

As we help donors create charitable legacies, our pledge remains that of being trusted charitable giving advisors that further the corporal and spiritual work of the Catholic Church. If you are contemplating what a giving strategy might look like, one catered to your specific values, interests, and timeline, I invite you to reach out to the Catholic Foundation.

We would gladly help ensure your charitable giving is efficient, supported by our expertise, and properly directed to create your greatest desired impact.

Yours in Christ,

**Greg Deja**  
Executive Director

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### Mission

We inspire and enable generous support for parishes and ministries rooted in the teachings of the Catholic Church to make a lasting impact in our communities and the lives of others.

### Funding Priorities

Sharing Our Catholic Faith  
Educating Children & Young Adults  
Supporting Religious Vocations  
Helping the Poor & Vulnerable  
Caring for Creation

### Contact

(616) 333-1640  
info@cfwmi.org  
catholicfoundationwmi.org  
360 Division Ave. S.  
Grand Rapids, MI 49503



## The Holy Spirit guides Peter and Michelle Baldwin on their stewardship journey

"You can never out-give God." This observation by an impactful priest inspired and challenged Peter and Michelle Baldwin's philanthropic journey. Peter and Michelle's stories may be very different, and their approaches to giving unique, but their shared perspective on first fruits has made generosity a foundational part of their marriage, business, and parenting philosophy.

Members of Shrine of St. Francis Xavier & Our Lady of Guadalupe Parish, Peter and Michelle's stewardship journeys started small — and from very different places.

### Early lessons in giving

Raised in the Protestant faith, Peter's giving story began with his great-grandmother Claire's generous spirit. Though she relied on state support in her home country of Switzerland, she always found enough to give her grandchildren and great-grandchildren thoughtful gifts. Later, Peter discovered she saved up all year to afford the purchases. It was "Great-granny Claire's generous spirit" that taught him his first lessons in humble giving.

These lessons continued in Peter's childhood through his father, who taught him about stewardship from a young age. From his father, Peter learned that "Comparison is the thief of joy," especially when it comes to finances. "He taught us that we would always be giving, and he made it easy."

Michelle's giving story began as a child in the Catholic Church. Her father died when she was just 10, leaving her family uncertain of the future. Michelle was able to attend Catholic schools through the generosity of others and that began God working on her heart to establish a commitment to giving.

### Unique perspectives, joint vision

Peter converted to Catholicism, and as a couple, Peter and Michelle gave to their parish regularly. However, it soon became apparent their approaches to tithing differed. Because Peter's family had consistently prioritized tithing, it had become somewhat automatic and transactional. For Michelle, whose childhood did not allow for regular tithing, giving always came from the heart.

In the earlier years as young parents of four children, Peter's mathematical brain often worried about their ability to give consistently. But even when the math didn't add up, as Peter would say, Michelle made room for giving.

"Michelle is one of my giving heroes," says Peter, who celebrates his wife's profound faith and inspiration from the Holy Spirit. Together, they were devoted to giving regularly, even when Peter established his partnership with the architectural firm AMDG.

The couple agrees they've been inspired by the Holy Spirit to combine their talents in the shared goal of building God's kingdom.

### A legacy of giving

Over 30 years ago, partnering with founder and former University of Michigan Architecture School Professor Calvin Jen, Peter took a leap of faith in a new business venture. During their first discussions, Calvin and Peter deliberated about how future potential profits would be spent. Peter shares that Calvin had a clear vision from the beginning, saying, "We're going to give charitably off the top. First fruit. And then we're going to give back to our team members. And then we're going to reinvest in the firm. And then we're going to bonus ourselves last," he remembers. "And I remember thinking...that seems consistent with faith...and that has patterned how we've done things ever since."

The name of the firm itself is an acronym for the Latin phrase Ad majorem Dei gloriam, meaning, "To the greater glory of God." This foundational principle and its practice showed Peter the practicality of giving in a business environment. "It's doable. And it's scalable," he says. Though it may be different for Fortune 500 companies than for a small business, "You can contribute to creating access for other families with more financial need."

"That really was the motivator for how we got involved with the Catholic Foundation," he adds. "And many of the things that AMDG's been able to support, Michelle and I have also been able to support."

### Supporting faith-based education

Peter and Michelle's most recent endowment supports St. Paul the Apostle School in Grand Rapids, where their daughter is a teacher.

*(Continued on page 5)*



Peter and Michelle Baldwin

This new endowment with the Catholic Foundation of West Michigan combines their passion for leaving a lasting legacy of giving with their belief in the power of faith-based education. "One way to give with our hearts is through education. That's why we work on scholarship funds at Catholic schools," shares Michelle. "The future of our Church is in the children and helping to raise Catholic leaders, families, and businesses. This benefits us all."

For Peter, this newest endowment is, "A pretty natural confluence of personal and professional priorities."

### Recent lessons on giving

Though Peter and Michelle were initially intimidated by the thought of setting up an endowment, they quickly learned that they could take it step by step, dollar by dollar — and that the Catholic Foundation simplifies the process for ease and accessibility.

"The Foundation is there for you every step of the way," says Michelle. "They are truly your partner, helping you determine what level of giving works for you and making it grow with their resources and experience."

In their marriage and in business, Peter and Michelle continue to prioritize philanthropy. They have also passed on this priority to their children. "I knew we always wanted them to give of their time and talent, and not just their treasure," says Peter, who has taken the children on mission trips to help them better understand populations in need.

With decades of giving under their belts, Peter and Michelle have learned many lessons about faith-filled charitable endeavors. "God loves a cheerful giver," says Peter, clarifying that this does not mean someone who is happy or silly, but joyful. "It's an expression of gratitude," he adds. "Don't give to anything if your heart's not in it."

Michelle advises potential givers: **"If it's on your heart, go for it. The Catholic Foundation will take care of the details."**

## Catholic Schools

Gone is summer break, that beautiful period where young families willingly accept relaxed bedtimes, lazy mornings, and ice cream for dinner on spontaneous occasions. Despite the challenges of getting reacquainted with more disciplined sleep patterns, the transition back to school is beautiful in its own way.

From a child's perspective, there is something magical about a fresh pack of pens, donning a new backpack, seeing your friends again, and meeting a new teacher. For parents sending their children to a Catholic school, there's something reassuring about sending your little (or big) ones into an environment that fosters in a very real way the belief that each child is uniquely designed by God for an important purpose.

Perhaps more than anything, a new academic year is accompanied by a profound sense of hopeful possibility. The Catholic Foundation wishes to express our gratitude for all those who support our Catholic schools and nurture such hopeful possibilities. Please join us in praying for the students, their families, and all the faculty and school leaders as they commit themselves, under Mother Mary's mantle, to growing each student in spirit, mind, and body in the 2023-24 school year.

## FULFILLING GOD'S PLAN FOR LEARNING & LIFE

- Across the alliance of 31 schools in the Diocese of Grand Rapids, **enrollment growth** continues to trend ahead of the nation – **up nearly 7% in the past two years.**
- In October 2022, The Nation's Report Card, largely considered the most consistent measure of student achievement in the United States, released its report. The results were clear: **Catholic schools place at the top of every level and in every subject.** One analyst even noted, "If Catholic schools were a state, they'd be the top-performing state in the nation."
- The **Bishop's Fund for Catholic Education** endowment at the Catholic Foundation provides approximately half of the total support of the annual Bishop's scholarships. In the past academic year, **Bishop's Scholarships were awarded to 935 students totaling \$551,698.**



Teachers at Catholic Central High School (GR) Jessica Malecki (left) and Cheryl Lambert attend the Diocesan Back-to-School Kickoff event at Cathedral Square Center.

# Maximize Charitable Impact and Minimize Taxes

## Smart Giving through Your IRA

An IRA offers a tax-advantaged way to save money over many years and have an income stream in retirement. Many donors have also found fulfilling and strategic ways to make meaningful contributions from their IRA to support the ministries closest to their hearts. As a qualified charity, the Catholic Foundation of West Michigan can receive donations from your IRA that do not affect your taxable income. This means you do not pay taxes on the transfer and every penny from your IRA will directly support your charitable goals.

There are two ways you can use a taxable IRA to maximize your charitable impact and minimize taxes:

1. Give to the Catholic Foundation during your retirement years through a Qualified Charitable Distribution (QCD).
2. Set up giving beyond your lifetime by naming a donor-advised fund or endowment fund at the Catholic Foundation as a charitable beneficiary.

There are many potential benefits of using this tool and several things to consider in order to determine if this is an effective charitable strategy for you. Here are some common questions and reasons why others have been inspired to give in this way.

## What is a Qualified Charitable Distribution (QCD) and how does it work?

Charitably-minded individuals and couples aged 70 1/2 and older can take advantage of a tax-smart strategy with traditional IRAs with the QCD, also known as a charitable IRA rollover. The QCD allows a donor to instruct a traditional IRA administrator to send up to \$100,000 per year — all or part of the annual Required Minimum Distribution (RMD) — to charity. The IRA assets go directly to supporting the charity, so donors don't report the QCD as taxable income and don't owe any taxes on the QCD. This is a smart way to give because status in higher tax bracket can adversely impact Social Security payments and Medicare benefits. In addition, the assets can make a significant impact at the Catholic Foundation, making QCDs a win-win strategy.

*"Making an IRA Charitable Distribution to the Foundation is a win-win: you can feel the joy of giving while reducing your income taxes simultaneously."*

-Jay and Helen Smith

## Can my IRA Charitable Rollover establish or add to a named endowed fund at the Catholic Foundation?

Yes, utilizing this provision to create or add to an existing endowed fund at the Catholic Foundation is welcomed, and is a tax-savvy move. The best part is that endowments grow even as they generate grants, so the support will grow in perpetuity.

*"Establishing an endowed scholarship in our name provides an opportunity to help families afford a Catholic education, and, by contributing from our IRA, we make the process tax-efficient. Our whole family takes pride in supporting our alma mater."*

-Jim and Ann Rosloniec

## What is a beneficiary designation and how does it work?

If you're not able to consider an IRA Charitable Rollover during your lifetime, leaving all or a percentage of your IRA to the Catholic Foundation when your earthly duties are completed will shelter those assets from income taxes and possibly estate taxes. This is accomplished by simply naming the Catholic Foundation of West Michigan as a beneficiary of all or a percentage of your IRA/retirement plan using a Beneficiary Designation Form that you can obtain from your IRA plan administrator.

## May I speak with someone at the Catholic Foundation about my options for giving through my IRA?

Absolutely. The Catholic Foundation of West Michigan would love to assist. We can provide customized recommendations and solutions to guide your philanthropic intentions. All inquiries are treated with confidentiality.



Contact Gift Planning Officer Teresa Reid at (616) 333-1641 or [treid@cfwmi.org](mailto:treid@cfwmi.org).

# Giving Together through a Family Endowment

Most families don't give a second thought to doing things together: celebrating, vacationing, dining, and worshipping. You could add "giving" to this list. Giving strengthens a family's bond by bringing everyone together in the shared goal of helping others. Chances are, many family members are already giving to charity, so working together will make a bigger impact on a favorite Catholic parish, school, or ministry.

A Family Endowment is a great way to establish a legacy of faith and generosity, honor or memorialize a loved one, and support your chosen organization or cause in perpetuity.

In a few simple steps, you can establish a charitable giving legacy.

- 1 Select a Beneficiary**  
In what ways are you called to make a difference? Explore your passions and determine who or what will benefit from your generosity.
- 2 Determine a Purpose**  
Is the fund restricted to a specific purpose or for the organization's general use? For example, the purpose of a parish fund could be to support faith formation programs.
- 3 Choose a Name**  
The fund name could include your family's name or the name of the charitable organization. You could also honor an individual or the memory of someone special who has passed on.
- 4 Decide How and When to Fund the Endowment**  
There are multiple ways to fund an endowment. Simply choose the method (cash, stock, IRA distribution, etc.) and timing (one-time gift, installment plan, future bequest, etc.). Once the fund is established, gifts of all sizes are welcomed.

Start the process to establish a Family Endowment.

Contact the Catholic Foundation today.

# Catholic Business Leaders Forums

## Gather and grow alongside Catholic business peers

The Catholic Foundation of West Michigan provides these forums for Catholic professionals to gain business insights from prominent leaders through the lens of our shared Catholic faith. These forums create an environment for idea sharing, professional development, and thoughtful conversation while fostering connections between Catholic business professionals throughout West Michigan.

Your registration for the forums also supports the **Leaders in Generosity grants**. A portion of each ticket sale and sponsorship will be awarded to nonprofits in West Michigan whose missions align with the Catholic Foundation's funding priorities.

Register Today!



## 2023 / 2024 Series



Looking Back and Leaning Forward: Lessons Through Years of Mentoring  
Wednesday, October 4, 2023

**Mike Jandernoa**

Founder/Chairman  
42 North Partners & Jandernoa  
Entrepreneurial Mentoring



Exploring the Role of a Catholic Health System in Promoting Community Health  
Wednesday, December 6, 2023

**Matt Biersack, MD**

President  
Trinity Health Grand Rapids



Drawing from Catholic Formation in Corporate Leadership  
Wednesday, February 28, 2024

**Lauren Snyder**

Vice President of Customer Experience  
Consumers Energy

### Cathedral Square Center

360 Division Ave. S., Grand Rapids, MI 49503

7:30 – 9:00am | Doors open at 7:00am

Tickets are \$40 per forum and include breakfast.

## Thank You to Our Title Sponsors

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INNOVATION

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## Our Purpose

The Catholic Foundation of West Michigan is a non-profit, charitable organization dedicated to serving both our donors and our Catholic community by facilitating charitable giving to impact and sustain a more caring community reflective of Christ's love.

# How are you called to share your blessings?

## Allow us to support your intent and impact.

### CONTACT

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