Catholic Legacy News

Catholic Foundation of North Georgia

5871 Glenridge Drive
Suite 300
Atlanta, GA 30328
404.497.9440

Ensuring that the Catholic Community and its ministries have the financial resources to serve and make a difference in the lives of current and future generations.

I am the vine, you are the branches.

Whoever remains in me and I in him will bear much fruit, because without me you can do nothing.

John 15:5

SHARING FAITH THROUGH CHARITABLE GIVING

"Everything we have is really on loan from God and we want to share His gifts with others."

Donna and Mark Bergeson established the Mark and Donna Bergeson Donor Advised Fund (DAF) in 2020. They decided to contribute to their DAF while they were both working, knowing the money would be invested and continue to grow, so they could use it for charitable giving once they retired. "Everything we have is really on loan from God and we want to share His gifts with others, in particular those that share our faith," Donna said.

Donna and Mark also see their DAF as an opportunity to involve their family in charitable giving. While both were raised in a family that gave to the church, charitable giving wasn't something that was talked about. The Bergesons want it to be something their three adult sons, Walter, Zack, and Trent, take to heart and share in their families. They also want to be able to give to organizations that are important to their family members, and be able to change those as the family evolves.

As a member of the Foundation's Board of Directors, Donna also sees the opportunity to use their DAF as a marketing tool. "We use the tribute gift options and give in honor of someone at an organization, so they get an opportunity to learn a little more about the Foundation and endowment funds," Donna shared. "Endowment funds allow organizations to continue to receive financial support even if the number of parishioners or supporters diminish in the future."

Some of the organizations the Bergesons support from their DAF include the University Catholic Center at Emory University, where they are parishioners, the Dominican Friars who staff the Catholic Center, St. Joseph Hospital, Mercy Care, and more. As a healthcare lawyer, Donna has a special affinity for Mercy Care, which provides low- and no-cost health services to low income and homeless individuals.

Mark and Donna agree that DAFs at the Catholic Foundation are easy to use. "It's easy to repeat grants in the portal," they shared, and they like knowing they can ask the Catholic Foundation for any areas of need or to learn about organizations in our archdiocese that match their charitable intentions.

The Catholic faith is very important to Mark and Donna, who shared that catholic meaning 'universal' describes how they feel about giving. "We need to be compassionate and helping others is a strong foundation of our faith," Mark said. Their donor advised fund allows them to do just that.

A FLEXIBLE AND SMART WAY TO GIVE

There are many ways to give to your church or favorite charities, but one rises to the top in terms of the flexibility and potential tax benefits it offers.

What is a Donor Advised Fund?

It's a lot like a private foundation, although it is much easier and less costly to establish and maintain. It is a charitable fund (or account) that you can contribute cash or appreciated assets to and give from over time, and it offers incredible financial and non-financial benefits.

Benefits of a Donor Advised Fund (DAF):

- Tax Deduction Now for Future Giving – When you establish and donate to a donor advised fund, you get a tax deduction for the current year and can give from the fund over time. There's no annual distribution requirement, and getting a tax deduction today allows you to do creative financial planning that can yield significant tax savings.
- Maximize Tax Deductions – Given how high the standard deduction is today (for example, married filing jointly is $29,200 and single filing is $14,600), it's difficult to receive much of a deduction for your charitable giving. Depending on your tax situation, it could benefit you to give 2, 3, or even more years' worth of donations to a donor advised fund (provided you're exceeding the standard deduction threshold), receive the additional deduction now, and take the standard deduction over the coming years as you donate from your fund. This allows you to maximize your charitable deductions.
- Reduce Capital Gains Taxes – You can give appreciated assets (needs to be an asset you have held for more than one year) and avoid having to realize the taxable gain, thereby saving on capital gains taxes. If it's a position you still want to hold, buy it right back with cash in an investment account and you've effectively just reset your cost basis while giving to your charitable fund in the process.
- Reduce Estate Tax – The current estate tax exemption is $13.6 million per person ($27.2 million for a married couple), although this is set to drop in half in 2026 as the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act of 2017 expires if Congress takes no action. Putting money into a donor advised fund during life or at death can reduce the size of your taxable estate and save those assets from estate tax.
- Anonymity – There may be times when you want to give without others knowing. Maybe you want to maintain privacy, humility, or perhaps you want to avoid solicitations for future donations. You can pick a name for your fund that doesn't reveal your family identity.
- Create a Legacy of Giving – Much like beneficiaries on an account, you can designate your children (for example) as successors to be able to take the baton and continue the legacy of giving you started. You could also name an endowment fund as the beneficiary to continue giving in perpetuity to the causes you care about.

Donor advised funds provide a great way to be a good steward of wealth you've been blessed with. From tax savings to creating a legacy of giving that can last for generations to come, the benefits are numerous, and the impact is meaningful.

Article written by Chris McCall, CFP®, CIMA®, Journey Beyond Wealth

Chris McCall and family, parishioners of St. Michael the Archangel Catholic Church in Woodstock

SET UP A FUND

It is easy to create a donor advised fund at the Catholic Foundation. Funds have been started with gifts from $5,000 to over $5 million. You will be set up with an easy-to-use online portal where you can request grants be made, copy previous grants, and see your fund's contributions and grant history.

Grants can be made to 501(c)3 public charities, including universities, parishes, schools, nonprofits, and more. Due diligence is conducted to ensure organizations' work is in accordance with Catholic teaching. The staff at the Catholic Foundation is aware of the needs of the Catholic community, and can assist you in discovering opportunities to match your philanthropic interests with organizations in our archdiocese.

CREATE YOUR LEGACY

WAYS TO CREATE A

DONOR ADVISED FUND

- Donate closely held stock
- Give cash or check
- Move a donor advised fund from another institution
- Convert a family foundation into a donor advised fund
- Give online via card or ACH transfer
- Allocate a portion of the sale of real estate or a business

How can I repay the Lord for all the great good done for me? - Psalm 116

You can create a legacy using a donor advised fund and instill a sense of charitable giving as part of your family culture. Decide as a family which charities you will support and easily track donations over time.

Leave the remainder of a DAF to create a new endowment fund at the Catholic Foundation at your passing. You can specify the name and the cause of your fund, so your charitable giving continues on in perpetuity. You could also choose for the remainder to go to an existing endowment fund that supports an organization important to you.

At the Catholic Foundation, our vision is ensuring that the Catholic community and its ministries have the financial resources to serve and make a difference in the lives of current and future generations. If you would like to learn more about charitable giving options and the integration of faith and giving, please contact us.

5871 Glenridge Drive, Suite 300 | Atlanta, GA 30328
404.497.9440 | cfnga.org