

# Arctic Footprints

News & Ideas for Charitable Giving

Fall/Winter 2019

## A Generous Heart

When Peter and Martha Esmailka adopted their son Harold, who is of Koyukon Athabascan Indian ancestry, in 1930, they couldn't know he would grow up to have such a charitable spirit and act as a bridge connecting the people who shared his heritage and the Catholic faith he embraced.

Harold Esmailka enjoyed an early childhood filled with love from his parents, learning "the old ways of survival" (fishing, hunting and trapping) as well as book knowledge. When Harold was 12 years old, his father passed away. Harold fulfilled one of his father's last requests by attending Holy Cross Mission boarding school to continue his education and learn more about the Catholic faith. He grew to consider Holy Cross his home, and he credits this as the link to his close association with the Diocese of Fairbanks today. "To me personally, they are like family and it's always been that way. My association with them goes way back," Harold reflected.

After his schooling and Army service, Harold found his calling as a pilot and often transported clergy to

different locations throughout Alaska. It was during one of these trips in 1958 Harold first met Florence Gurtler and they were married two years later.

Harold's successful aviation career included time as a decorated pilot (awarded 50 Years of Dedicated Service in Aviation Safety from the FAA in 2011) as well as buying, developing and selling air service companies. As his success grew so did his generosity. His spirit of thankfulness is evident with the many charitable organizations, including the Diocese of Fairbanks, he supports.

Harold will tell you there was a time when he struggled to find a balance between his Catholic faith and his Native culture. Eventually he discovered a peace by treasuring both equally and wanted to share this insight with those also wrestling with these issues. Harold searched for someone he felt could incorporate the joining of "old ways" and "new ways" through art and found this in the work of renowned Alaskan artist Jon Van Zyle. The Denaahuto' painting Harold envisioned was given to St. Peter in



**Harold and Florence Esmailka**

Chains Church in Ruby, Alaska, where it is on display.

Harold and Florence are enjoying retirement together—spending time with children and grandchildren. He also finds time to volunteer and financially support various local committees. Harold's dedication and service to God, the people and culture of Alaska, the Catholic church and countless others are wonderful testimonies to a generous heart connecting people together.



## Inside:

- Giving at Year-End to Assist the Diocese of Fairbanks
- Maximizing Your Giving



# Giving at Year-End to Assist the Diocese of Fairbanks

Year-end is a good time to review important financial decisions and make plans for the future. Thoughtful planning today can make it easier to balance your personal and philanthropic goals for the rest of the year and beyond.

## Reach your goals

Whether you already have financial plans in place or you're just beginning the process, it's important to think about how to accomplish your goals. There are ways to take care of loved ones and continue to support your charitable interests, such as the Diocese of Fairbanks.

**Cash gifts** are popular and the most convenient to make. These gifts are typically made by check or online with a credit card. Cash gifts must be completed before December 31 to be tax deductible for this year.

## Give effectively

When making your gifts, remember to save your receipts and acknowledgments. If you itemize your deductions for tax purposes, you can deduct cash contributions up to 60% of your Adjusted Gross Income. While few people reach this limit, the tax code allows donors to “carry forward” excess gift amounts for up to five more years.

Your charitable gifts may even help you itemize more of your other deductions such as mortgage interest and up to \$10,000 of state and local taxes.

In addition to regular tax savings, you may be entitled to additional tax benefits when you give **appreciated securities**—see Page 3 for more information.

## More information

We hope the ideas in this issue of *Arctic Footprints* are helpful as you make your plans. If we can provide you and your advisors with more information, confidentially and with no obligation, please return the enclosed card or contact us.

## Seminarian Endowment Update



Dominik Wojcik



Nick Shamrell



Piotr Oprych



Josh Miller

Our Seminarian Endowment just recently reached a balance of over \$1 million. We have raised over \$320,000—just this year—from generous donors all over the United States. Catholic Extension partnered with us again this year by offering a \$25,000 match for all qualifying first-time donations of \$1,000 or more OR second-time donations greater than \$1,250, matched on the increased amount—once we reach a qualifying amount of at least \$100,000. We are well on our way to earning the additional \$25,000 and **we could not have done it without your generous gifts and prayerful support!** *If you are interested in making a donation to the Seminarian Endowment Fund this year, please call Lin Craig in our Diocesan Donation Office at 907-374-9532 or make your gift online at <http://bit.ly/SemEndow19>.*

# Maximize Your Giving

As you finalize your year-end plans, here are some aspects for you to consider. There are benefits to giving assets such as stocks, bonds and mutual funds. When you give securities or other property that has increased in value, you can often make the gift at a lower cost than a gift of cash. Using securities that you have owned for a year or more to make your year-end gifts can be a wise choice.

When you give this way, your itemized tax deduction is based on the current value of the stock, not just the amount you paid for it. As an added benefit, no capital gains tax will be owed on the increased value.

## For example

Let's suppose you are considering a gift of \$5,000 using either cash or appreciated stock. Which is the better choice? You originally purchased the stock for \$1,500 and it is now worth \$5,000. If you sell the stock, you will owe capital gains tax on the \$3,500 increase in the stock's value.

However, by using the securities to make your gift, you will pay no capital gains tax and you will enjoy a tax deduction based on the full value of the stock if you itemize your deductions. Making this gift enables you to use your cash in other ways—for example, repurchasing the donated stock at a higher cost basis if you prefer to retain the stock in your portfolio.

Giving appreciated securities also allows you to conserve your cash because it doesn't require you to withdraw any funds from your bank account. Please contact us or your financial advisors for more information.

## The Charitable IRA

If you are 70½ or older, you can make charitable gifts directly from an IRA (up to a total of \$100,000 per individual per year; \$200,000 per couple with separate IRAs). These charitable IRA transfers are not taxed and count toward the annual required minimum distribution. Those who qualify should carefully consider the additional benefits of making all or a portion of their charitable gifts directly from an IRA. These tax-free gifts are particularly wise for those who no longer itemize deductions for income tax purposes.



## Three Gift Annuity Benefits

One reason gift annuities have been popular for so many years is the attractive benefits they provide, including:

- 1. Fixed payments for life.** Once your payment rate is determined, it can never change, regardless of stock market conditions or any other economic indicators. This can be one way to offset fluctuating investment income.
- 2. Immediate income tax charitable deduction.** You are entitled to a tax deduction for about half the amount transferred. Any unused deduction can be carried over for up to five years.
- 3. Partial avoidance of capital gains tax.** When you use appreciated assets to fund a gift annuity, you avoid any capital gains that would be due if you sold the assets. Although some of the capital gain is included in your income, the tax is payable over your life expectancy.

## Considering a Bequest?

If you are considering making a gift to the Diocese of Fairbanks through your will or trust, we sincerely thank you. These gifts make a profound difference in our ministries. Here is some language you may want to share with your attorney:

“I give the sum of \$\_\_\_\_\_ to the Catholic Bishop of Northern Alaska, 1312 Peger Road, Fairbanks, Alaska 99709”; or “I leave all (or a portion) of the rest, residue, and remainder of my property of every kind and character, including personal property and real estate and wheresoever the same may be situated, I give and devise to the Catholic Bishop of Northern Alaska, 1312 Peger Road, Fairbanks, Alaska 99709.”

## Thank You for Your Dedication



Please join us in extending Teresa Chepoda-USibelli best wishes at her new position at the University of Alaska. She has been a wonderful addition

at the Diocese of Fairbanks and, although we will miss her tremendously, we are excited for her new adventure.

Dr. Les Maiman, Mission Outreach Coordinator for the Diocese, will be available if you have any questions or would like more information. You can contact him at 1-907-888-3722 or at [mission@cbna.org](mailto:mission@cbna.org).



# A New Church for the People of Chefnak

**Thanks to the donations of many generous benefactors, the Diocese of Fairbanks is happy to announce the rebuilding of the church beginning in 2020. The total project cost is \$2.5 million and, as of today, we have raised \$1.37 million.**

St. Catherine of Siena has, from the outset (1937), been the patron saint of the Chefnak parish, which is located a little southeast of Nelson Island in the Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta.

The first Chefnak church, built in 1952, was lost to fire in 1972. Three years later, the people of the town rebuilt the church without any outside funding but, sadly, another devastating fire destroyed the church in 2004.

After several years of fundraising, the Diocese has raised enough funding to begin rebuilding St. Catherine's. It is our hope the project will continue to receive funding up until its completion.

Chefnak—even in the absence of a building—continues to be an active and entirely Catholic community. The new church building is designed to seat 252 in the main worship area with space for an additional 48 in the lobby/social area.

Design improvements include increased lighting, a beautiful worship space, room for social functions and religious education classes, storage, gift shop, office, enhanced heating options to conserve fuel, as well as a ramp and stairs to provide access to all. There will also be room left for growth and added facilities in the future.

The Diocese of Fairbanks welcomes any donations toward the rebuilding of St. Catherine of Siena Catholic Church. To donate, please call the Diocesan Donation Office at 907-374-9532 or online at [dioceseoffairbanks.org](http://dioceseoffairbanks.org) or at <http://bit.ly/ChefnakChurch>.



## More information

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